



البيت العربي Casa Árabe

A reference guide

# Muslims in Spain

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# Foreword

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is one of the most culturally diverse regional intergovernmental organizations. In addition to various ethnic and linguistic groups living in the region spanning from Vancouver to Vladivostok, it has nine Muslim-majority participating States and substantial Muslim minority populations. Recognizing the value of such diversity, OSCE participating States have pointed out the need for a better understanding of Muslim communities, as misunderstandings, negative stereotypes, and provocative images used to depict Muslims are leading to heightened antagonism and in some cases even violence.

In response, the OSCE Ministerial Council adopted a decision in Ljubljana in 2005 which encouraged the OSCE to "continue to raise awareness and develop measures to counter prejudice, intolerance and discrimination, while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief".<sup>1</sup> The decision also called upon OSCE participating States to "[c]onsider developing, in close co-operation with civil society, concrete measures which do not endanger freedom of information and expression, in order to counter xenophobic stereotypes, intolerance and discrimination in the media and to encourage programmes to educate children and youth about prejudice or bias they may encounter in the media or on the Internet."<sup>2</sup>

As a response to the increase of anti-Muslim hate crimes across the OSCE region, in its research and consultations with civil society representatives and experts, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has been supporting the development of awareness-raising and educational tools to combat intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. In this regard, the need for awareness-raising tools about Muslim communities was first noted in 2006 at an NGO roundtable meeting on the "Representation of Muslims in Public Discourse" convened by ODIHR and Ambassador Ömür Orhun, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims. Taking into account the recommendations that came out of the meeting, ODIHR launched a project to support the development of country-specific resource books on Muslim communities in the OSCE region. These books aim to promote an increased understanding of the diversity of Muslim communities living across the OSCE region and to provide a more contextualized picture of their culture and life and their contributions to society.

This reference guide is the first one of its series to be produced and it is fitting that Spain is the first country to produce such a guide. Under the Spanish Chairmanship of the OSCE, increased attention and priority was given to the need to combat intolerance and discrimination against

Muslims. In November 2007, the Chairmanship convened a high-level conference in order to mobilize OSCE States to further strengthen their efforts to promote greater mutual respect and understanding towards Muslim communities throughout the OSCE region.

Spain is also the hub of many good practices aimed at increasing understanding about the history, culture and identity of Muslim communities. At the forefront of these efforts has been Casa Árabe and its International Institute of Arab and Muslim World Studies. The fact that this resource guide has been developed in partnership with Casa Árabe attests to the quality and value of the information contained within it. I would like to congratulate Casa Árabe for its excellent work and leadership in preparing this Guide, in particular their efforts to engage a broad and diverse group of representatives from Muslim communities throughout Spain.

ODIHR looks forward to providing its support and technical assistance for the development of similar resource guides in other participating States. It is our hope that such tools will contribute to a more balanced and informed public discourse about Muslim communities and draw further attention to the significant historical and cultural contributions that Muslims have and will continue to make across the OSCE region.

**Janez Lenarčič**

Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

<sup>1</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 10/05, "Tolerance and Non-Discrimination: Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding", Ljubljana, 6 December 2005, < [http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/2005/12/18653\\_\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/2005/12/18653__en.pdf) >.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

# Presentation.

## Why a handbook?

Islam has been an integral part of European history since the Middle Ages, in al-Andalus, Sicily, Malta or the Balkans, and has achieved continuity in Bosnia and Albania. In modern times, and after long processes of immigration, Muslims are helping to build the new Europe where they have made their home. Muslims are an important part of modern European societies in both number (around 20 million) and nationality (many are European citizens), as they have been throughout history. The process of transcultural communication underway in Europe today requires an active and pedagogical response to foster the integration of Muslim communities and fight against exclusion and discrimination. Moreover, the construction of a plural and diverse Europe requires dialogue and adaptation by all society to the fundamental principles that must guide us on our common journey.

In stark contrast to the characteristic ambiguity of "old" generations, the interests and concerns of new generations of Muslims in Europe focus on matters relating to education, exclusion, the role of the State and ways of living their faith in a social context where Islam is a minority. Settlement in the country of destination - a phenomenon that began when the entry of immigrants was restricted in the mid seventies, in exchange for allowing resident immigrants to reunite their families - prompted previously culturally anonymous immigrants to demand recognition of their identity. The culture of discretion characteristic of immigrants who considered their stay in a foreign country to be provisional and transitory has gradually made way for the vindication of identity by communities that have decided to settle in the country. In addition to this desire to integrate, Muslims wish to practice their religion and educate their children according to their own references, with the creation of more local associations and places of worship and stronger religious leadership.

This new visibility of Muslims coincides with an economic crisis in Europe marked by worsening social inequalities and xenophobic backlash on the part of certain parts of society in countries of destination. This is far from a conducive environment for listening to the needs of Muslim, and less so when a whole series of violent international events have accentuated Europeans' mistrust of the Muslim world and Islamic culture.

These suspicions have led to a resurgence of old Western cultural images of Islam marked by prejudices, fears and the negative portrayals of Muslims. This has sadly had numerous harmful results: the promotion of Islamophobic sentiment in societies in countries of destination; the radicalisation and estrangement of immigrants in the society of destination; and the concealment, neglect or mistrust of important transformations taking place in Muslims' experience of the Islamic way of life in Europe. This is all alongside the discovery of their new status as a minority which requires them to integrate in a new order of cultural values that can offer rights and development opportunities lacking in their countries of origin.

Aware of the importance of this issue, Casa Árabe, within the framework of its International Institute of Arab and Muslim World Studies (IEAM), has joined the *Country-specific resource books on Muslims* project sponsored, with funding from Spain and Turkey, by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the OSCE, and has prepared this Reference Guide on *Muslims in Spain*, which will be followed by similar publications in other OSCE member countries.

Our Guide aims to offer readers a better understanding of the multifaceted realities of Muslims living in our country. This is based on real facts in order to deconstruct imaginary conceptions. With this purpose in mind, Casa Árabe has supervised the preparation of this book in collaboration with professional and academic experts from different fields and disciplines, taking into account aspects of plurality and diversity. Religion is clearly important, but so are sociological, institutional, political and economic aspects. Moreover, far from the stereotypical perception of Muslim society as a monolithic community, Muslims must be treated as a group of individuals whose personal and collective choices are treated with equal importance, and in which generational divisions, gender and leadership are all components that generate even greater plurality. It is this complex reality we aim to reflect in this book.

This Guide also takes into account the voice of Muslims themselves and includes a series of opinions and testimonies from Muslim men and women, representative of this plurality, reflecting on and discussing the main issues addressed in the book.

We also felt it worthwhile to include a reflection on al-Andalus and the imaginary conceptions inherited from this historical experience linking Spain to the Arab and Islamic world. In the chapter *Rethinking the historical legacy of al-Andalus*, the historian Eduardo Manzano deconstructs the clichés of both negative and idyllic interpretations of the Andalusian legacy in an exercise of historical objectivity in which black and white are abandoned in favour of a more balanced understanding of that chapter in Spain's history. A proper understanding of the contribution of al-Andalus to Hispanic personality, without idealizing or devaluing its importance, is perhaps the best way to acquire a more impartial understanding of the integration of Muslims into modern Spanish society.

Last but not least, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the people who kindly agreed to be interviewed for the chapter *Opinions and Testimonies*, as well as those who, in different stages of this book, contributed opinions and suggestions: Mohamed Chaib, Juan Ferreiro Galguera, Estrella Rodríguez, Abdennur Prado, Silvia Taulés, Lorenzo Cachón, Irune Aguirrezabal, José M<sup>a</sup> Ferré, Pedro Antonio Ríos and Eugenia Relano.

**Gema Martín Muñoz**

Director General of Casa Árabe-IEAM



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# 1

## Muslim presence in Spain today



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**How many Muslims live today in Spain? Although their number is normally estimated at approximately 1,300,000, this, like most estimates of the number of Muslim citizens in Europe, is still an approximate figure due to restrictions imposed by different legislations on the identification of citizens according to their beliefs or ideologies. In Spain, Article 16.2 of the 1978 Constitution specifies that “no one may be compelled to make statements regarding their religion, beliefs or ideology.” This makes it difficult to obtain an accurate estimate of the number of Muslims in Spain. Available figures are extrapolated from immigration statistics or inconclusive surveys that vary substantially according to the source used. The number of Muslims living in Spain is normally calculated using statistics for the number of legal residents from countries with majority Muslim populations, thus allowing immigrants from countries where Islam is the majority religion to be identified as Muslims. These figures take into account Muslim immigrants who do not have Spanish citizenship, but do not include illegal immigrants and Spanish Muslims.**

Who are the Muslims who live in Spain today? One characteristic of this community is its plurality and diversity. This may account for a certain tendency to classify and identify groups within Muslim communities.

Classifications, although revealing, often fail to reflect a much more complex context, namely that the practice of Islam and the plural reality of communities and citizens identified as Muslims are not monolithic blocks. Muslims and the practice of Islamic faith can be identified in different ways. From a religious standpoint, therefore, distinctions existing within the Islamic world are also reflected in Spain. Sunni Islam is the main branch of Islam, with

Shi'a Muslims being a minority. Sunni Islam has various schools of law that establish different religious practice; this is the majority branch of Islam in Spain since most immigrants are from Morocco and they officially follow the Maliki school of Sunni Islam. However, Sufi brotherhoods have also been established in Spain. Although Sufism is normally associated with Spanish converts to Islam, Sufi practices also include cultural traditions from many Muslim countries. Therefore, such general classifications of religious practices and schools of law are only partially valid for describing certain communities whose cultural heritage and individual backgrounds are much more complex and heterogeneous.

This diversity in religious practice is accompanied by cultural and linguistic plurality. When considering the presence of Islam in Spain, it is important to consider the cultural diversity of each country of origin, whether Arabic, African, Asian or European (as well as the multiple realities in each geographical area) and understand the dimension of different religions, which may be interpreted in different ways and which have developed through different cultures and adapted to different historical contexts.

The evolution of Muslim presence and increased visibility mainly follow the stages of migratory flows toward Spain. In the sixties and seventies, the number of Arab businessmen and diplomats increased with the establishment of diplomatic relationships between Spain and Arab countries. The number of students from Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Palestine also increased, attracted by the cultural policy of the Franco regime, which signed cooperation agreements with universities in those countries as part of its policy “of friendship with the Arab world.” However, from the eighties onwards, with Spain's economic recovery and the Immigration

Law of 1985, Muslims began to come to Spain regularly, mainly from Maghreb countries and Sub-Saharan Africa. Immigrant labour was necessary for production as a temporary measure to overcome labour shortages. This gave rise to the term “immigrant workers” and also to the phenomenon of clandestine immigration. In the nineties Muslim male immigrants were reunited with their wives and children and Muslim presence finally became “visible.”

Nevertheless, the term “immigration” encompasses a complex set of different motivations and circumstances: refugees, political asylum seekers, economic motivations, the search for new opportunities, training, etc. Some immigrants come to stay, some are just passing through and some want to return home. Some fulfil their aspirations, some fail and some simply reconsider their decision to emigrate. Life marks each migratory experience, producing a wide variety of individual profiles of immigrants in general and Muslim immigrants specifically. We must also not forget Spanish converts to Islam or Spanish Muslims. Different immigrants, Spaniards, nationalised immigrants, temporary workers and refugees also have many different identities in terms of their religion, gender, age, ideology, civic commitment and nationality. In short, these are men and women who are not simply or exclusively transitory workers but people who affirm and redefine their identities, with their own cultural and religious characteristics, as members of a new society, gradually enhancing the visibility of Islam by opening places of religious worship, *halal* stores, etc. The recognition of Islam's “clear and deep-rooted influence” (*notorio arraigo*) in Spanish society and the subsequent signing of the Cooperation Agreement between the Spanish Government and the Islamic Commission of Spain in 1992

have conferred a new legal and institutional dimension to this new Muslim presence as a religious minority.

Academic literature on Muslims in Spain uses categories to break down the basic classification of “immigrant Islam” into immigrant workers, students, political refugees, entrepreneurs, diplomats and liberal professionals according to their reasons for emigrating. In contrast to immigrant Islam, there is also reference to “autochthonous Islam” which would include natural Muslims –in the cities of Ceuta and Melilla–, nationalised Muslims, immigrants who acquired Spanish nationality and Spaniards who have converted to Islam.

Statistics for these different groups, based on the abovementioned definitions, can be obtained from official immigration data, the Municipal Census and the demographic study carried out by the UCIDE (Union of Islamic Communities in Spain) which calculates the number of Muslim citizens by combining data from the 2007 census with those of the Islamic Commission of Spain. The results of this study concluded that there are around one million Muslims in Spain today, representing approximately 2.5% of the total population. Of these, almost 30% are Spanish and 70% immigrants from one of the 57 member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Spanish Ministry of Employment and Immigration data on ‘foreigners with registration certificates or residence cards’ on September 30, 2008, and accepting the identification between original nationality and religious identity, show that Moroccans (681,829) are the largest Muslim group, followed by Algerians (46,995), Pakistanis (36,935) and Senegalese (31,216).

The most noteworthy aspect of the analysis of official data is perhaps the geographical distribution of Muslims

throughout the country (Figure 1), with Catalonia having the largest number of Muslim residents (almost 300,000), followed by Andalusia with nearly 120,000 and Madrid with more than 80,000. These communities represent three logical destinations for immigrants due to the industrial development of Spain's two largest cities, Barcelona and Madrid, and the strong agricultural sector in Andalusia. They are followed by the Autonomous Communities of Valencia and Murcia, which have more than double the populations of the autonomous communities of Castilla La Mancha, the Balearic Islands, Aragon, the Canary Islands and Castilla y León, which have between 22,000 and 32,000 Muslims. No other autonomous community has more

than 15,000 Muslims, although the Basque Country, Extremadura and La Rioja are close and Navarre has 10,000. Cantabria has 1,900 Muslim immigrants and Galicia, Ceuta and Melilla have similar numbers. In the case of the two autonomous cities, this figure only includes legally resident immigrants and not the large number of Muslims from Ceuta and Melilla.

Another interesting fact revealed by these statistics is the number of children born to foreigners in Spain. Under Spanish Law, which establishes different regulations for obtaining Spanish nationality by means of residence, these children will naturally acquire Spanish citizenship and will not appear in immigration statistics.

The paradox is that, as in European countries with longer histories of immigration, terms are sought to identify Muslim citizens who continue to be associated with immigration: will the categories of "second", "third" and "fourth" generations of immigrants continue to be used to refer to people who have lived their whole lives in Spain and whose references in terms of citizenship are essentially Spanish? When referring to their attitude toward religion, will pre-determined definitions continue to be used to describe them because they are distant descendents of people from a certain country? It would be better to formulate and accept a dynamic and inclusive concept of Muslim identity that does not permanently differentiate between the autochthonous and the foreign.

**Figure 1. Geographical distribution of foreign residents of Muslim origin**



Source: Spanish Ministry of Employment and Immigration

**For more information, see:**

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Spanish National Statistics Institute [www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es)

Demographic study of the Muslim population carried out by the Observatorio Andalusi (UCIDE) <http://mx.geocities.com/hispanomuslime/estademograf.doc>



## 2

# Creating institutions. How Muslims are organised?





**In broad terms, the institutionalisation of Islam initially sought to achieve the recognition of religious freedoms during a period in which the Muslim community in Spain was only starting to become visible. The 1967 Law on Religious Freedom led to the creation of the first associations in Ceuta and Melilla and mainly in Madrid and southern Spain. However, in the early eighties the associations were still in the embryonic stage and had mainly been promoted by students from Arab countries and Spanish converts to Islam, most of whom had discovered Islam through the teachings of the Morabitun World Movement, founded by the Muslim Shayj Abdalqadir As-Sufi (formerly Ian Dallas) who had been educated in the tradition of the *tariqah darqawiyya-shadiliyya* order in Morocco and whose influence extended through different European countries. Nevertheless, that differentiation, despite its importance, was only one of the aspects that characterised the development of incipient Muslim associations, since other factors such as ideology, identity and the internal logistics behind the formation of leadership also influenced the formation of the first associations.**

Spain's economic take-off in the early eighties was an important phenomenon that strongly influenced the make-up of Islam in Spain. This process of economic recovery was consolidated in the nineties and made Spain a new destination for immigrants, and especially attractive for citizens from Maghreb countries, particularly Moroccans due to their country's proximity to Spain. This economy-driven immigration has increased the demographic importance of Islam visible in Spain today.

The incipient associative movement received a boost with the signing of the Cooperation Agreement between the Spanish State and the Islamic

Commission of Spain in 1992. During this period, Muslim presence in Spain was still not statistically significant or publicly visible, yet Spain provided a legal framework for the recognition of religious practices that still exists today and is considered to be one of the most advanced in Europe in terms of the legal recognition of the organisation of religious practices and rights to education and religious expression. Thus, the early institutionalisation of Islam is explained by a political will that, while recognising the rights of religious minorities, completed an entire process of acquisition of citizens' rights and freedoms in Spain that began during the democratic transition.

The first prerequisite before this Agreement could be adopted was the recognition of Islam's "clear and deep-rooted influence" (notorio arraigo) in Spanish society. This "clear and deep-rooted influence" was recognised on July 14, 1989, at the request of the Muslim Association of Spain, which later became the founding nucleus of the Union of Islamic Communities in Spain (UCIDE). The text claiming Islam's clear influence in Spanish society stated that Islam is one "of the spiritual faiths that has shaped the historical personality of Spain. Our culture and tradition are inseparably linked to the religious foundations that have forged the deepest essences of the Spanish people and character (...) Islam, given its scope and number of believers, is today deeply rooted in Spain."

Two months later the Federation of Spanish Islamic Entities (FEERI) was founded to align the interests of the still small Spanish Muslim community and give it a single visible leadership capable of negotiating the Cooperation Agreement with representatives of the Spanish government. This federation was formed by communities and associations of Muslims with

different characteristics and backgrounds: converted Muslims, nationalised Muslims of Arab origin, Muslims from Ceuta, Melilla, Morocco, etc., some of whom may be considered pioneers of Islamic religious associations in Spain.

However, this apparent consensus was broken in early 1991 after serious discrepancies in negotiations, mainly on the subject of financing. As a result, seven associations split off to form a new federation, the UCIDE (Union of Islamic Communities in Spain). These entities adopted opposing positions until the government decided that both entities had to form a single association if the Agreement, which was still in the negotiation phase, was to be signed. As a result, the Islamic Commission of Spain (CIE) was formed on February 18, 1992, as the sole body representing Islamic entities in the negotiation, signing and supervision of a Cooperation Agreement, which had practically been drafted by this time. The creation of this commission actually sped up the negotiation process, which concluded on April 28, 1992, with the signing of the Cooperation Agreement between the Spanish State and the Islamic Commission of Spain (together with agreements signed with federated Evangelical and Jewish bodies).

The structure of the Islamic Commission, with two secretary-generals sharing functions and responsibilities, has always been rather fragile. For fifteen years the Commission was represented by the same important figures, although its leaders had very specific profiles that, with time, ceased to reflect the Muslim plurality introduced by immigration. In fact, today the Commission's official representative before the State is not supported by large sectors of the Muslim community, making it difficult to coordinate needs and demands presented by collectives at the local level.

The CIE was created in response to the special circumstances of the Spanish Muslim community in the late eighties and early nineties. However, the current needs of the Muslim community have little or nothing in common with those of Muslims in Spain twenty years ago, mainly because of their demographic growth and greater diversity. In the last three or four years, different religious federations have been formed in various Autonomous Communities. Although these entities are not members of the CIE and are not allowed to participate in the implementation and development of the Cooperation Agreement, they act as representatives of the Muslim community in their respective territories and claim their right to represent the Muslim community at the national level.

In fact, given the difficulties involved in administering community needs nationally, channels for dialogue and forms of representation have developed at municipal and autonomous community levels, where local Islamic entities play an important role. These entities present requests for the construction of Muslim cemeteries (or the reservation of plots for the burial of Muslims in municipal cemeteries), the allocation of land for the construction of mosques or the teaching of Islam in schools and colleges in their towns and cities. They also intervene when conflicts arise in schools due to the use of the hijab (veil) or schools refuse to provide special menus (halal food) to take into account the specific needs of Muslim pupils, or participate actively as volunteers in municipal entities to promote inter-religious dialogue or on panels to resolve local disputes. They do not have to be registered in the Religious Entities Register or in the corresponding municipal or autonomous community register as cultural or social associations.

These alternative entities and associations to the national CIE have undergone a strong structuring process in recent

years because many of them have realized that autonomous community entities (and also local entities, albeit to a lesser extent) have strong decision-taking capacities in their respective territories, introducing specific policies to reorganize and broaden the scope of Muslim representation, combining religious authority with a community role to foster the integration of Muslim immigrants. This has happened, for example, in Madrid, the Balearic Islands, Valencia, Murcia, Andalusia and Catalonia. Their basic mission is to act as intermediaries with public authorities, channelling all requests presented by the members of their communities in exercising their right to religious freedom. However, apart from focusing on municipal and autonomous community issues, they also demand, more and more insistently in fact, that their growing specific weight be reflected through greater representation within the CIE.

This is one of the objectives of the Cultural and Islamic Council of Catalonia (Consell Islàmic i Cultural de Catalunya), founded in June 2000. Although it is officially registered as a social and cultural association, its purpose is to bring together imams and, taking advantage of their status as community leaders, to create a meeting and training forum for them to act as representatives also recognised by local authorities and thus play a positive role in the integration of immigrants. The Council acts as a mediator between the

Muslim minority and society in general, representing Muslims before local and national administrative authorities and participating in the development of policies to foster the integration of immigrants.

Other regional and national initiatives have been launched, definitively triggering the debate on the renewal of the CIE as it was conceived in 1992. In fact, while the UCIDE has remained stable, the FEERI has undergone an intense process of transformation resulting in the renewal of its management in 2006. Three new federations have also been set up in regions with large immigrant populations: the Muslim Federation of Spain, the Islamic Federation of the Balearic Islands and the Islamic Federation of Murcia. These three federations, together with the Islamic Council of Catalonia, are calling for democratic elections to renew the CIE and thus broaden the official representation of the Muslim community.

All this has given rise to a complex scenario marked by an intense process of review geared to tackling future challenges. The demographic and sociological changes that have taken place in the Muslim community have revitalised their organizations. In the current context, with public opinion strongly influenced by a negative and stereotyped image of Islam, new types of mobilisation and leadership are required.

## Pluralism and Coexistence Foundation

**The agreement reached between the Islamic Community and the Spanish Government in 1992 recognizes Islam in Spain and creates the necessary framework for Muslims to exercise their fundamental rights. Furthermore, the preliminary recitals of the Agreement make an important historical affirmation that Islam “is a centuries-old tradition in our country and primary relevance in the make-up of the Spanish identity.”**

The agreement addresses the status of Islamic religious leaders and imams, legal protection for mosques used for worship, civil validity of marriage ceremonies held pursuant to Islamic rites (but does not recognise other institutions in Muslim marriages that are considered discriminatory against women such as polygamy or repudiation), religious services in public centres or establishments, Muslim religious teaching in state and state-subsidised private schools, the commemoration of Muslim religious holidays and cooperation between the State and the CIE for the conservation and furthering of Islamic historic and artistic heritage. The Agreement also introduces the denomination *halal* in legal terminology and introduces certain rules to regulate and control food products “in accordance with the spiritual dimension and the specific peculiarities of Islamic Law.”

Unfortunately, after the Agreement was signed complications arose regarding financing and the implementation of its contents. In order to resolve this issue, in October 2004 the Pluralism and Coexistence Foundation (*Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia*) was created based on the instructions of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs. In addition to financing activities, this institution aims

to increase the visibility of religious diversity in Spain and promote religious freedom and integration of minorities.

The Foundation promotes religious freedom by supporting and promoting educational and cultural activities and aims to foster the social integration of minority faiths recognized by the State. The development of these initiatives is structured on the financing of activities proposed by the institutional representatives of each faith through federations and entities registered in the Register of Religious Entities, as well as the production of educational materials and research on minority faiths.

The Foundation receives financial support from national and international public organisations and its statutes also envisage the possibility of accepting donations, bequests and inheritances simply as a way of regulating and publicising the financing of minority faiths. In the case of Islam, this has aroused controversy for different reasons due to suspicions of security experts reinforced by the media that mosques and mosque activities may be ideologically affected by foreign governments, as well as rigorist doctrines that would not favour the integration of immigrant Muslims.

Although alarmism has sometimes distorted the complex reality of financing the activities associated with the worship of Islam, from a legal point of view this matter is very difficult to resolve because the current legal frame establishes strict limits regarding the financing of religious activities. The Foundation invests most of its budget in financing socio-educational activities promoted by associations through the Federations and the CIE, but the current legislation does not permit financing the construction of mosques or the salaries of imams. To solve the lack of public funding, the biggest mosques

### For more information, see:

Iván Jiménez-Aybar. **El islam en España: aspectos institucionales de su estatuto jurídico.** Pamplona: Navarra Gráfica Ediciones, 2004

Agustín Motilla (ed.). **Los musulmanes en España: Libertad religiosa e identidad cultural.** Madrid: Trotta, 2004.

Ali M. Laarbi. **Hacia una representación democrática del culto islámico de España.** Almería, 2007.

along with a few more modest oratories and Islamic centres may receive donations of public funds from Muslim countries that invest money in financing the religious activities of Muslims abroad, donations from international organizations or private donations. Other religious minorities use similar practices to improve their organizational resources. After the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004, a cloud of suspicion together with a lack of state control on the financing of mosques and Imams, led to attempts to establish closer control of the financial matters of such communities. However, the financing of religious activities is difficult to control efficiently because it is not specifically regulated by law.

*Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia* was set up to partly resolve this problem and at the same time promote the accommodation of religious needs of Muslims in Spain. Moreover, growing literature on Islam in Spain shows that this is the main objective of Muslim leaders, who, despite their diversity, reveal a common desire to create reference frameworks in which Muslims can easily identify themselves as Spanish citizens.

In Catalonia, different Muslim entities and experts on religious issues consider that it would be worthwhile to set up a foundation which, in a clear and transparent manner, would have the necessary experience and knowledge to organize the funding coming in from Muslim countries for the building of mosques. However, the managing of the mosque would always be in the hands of the resident Muslims in the territory in which the mosque would be built.

#### For more information, see:

[www.pluralismoyconvivencia.es](http://www.pluralismoyconvivencia.es)

## Consuming *halal* products

**The Arab term *halal* refers to anything that is lawful or permissible, and is the opposite of *haram*, which refers to everything that is forbidden. *Halal* in Arabic refers to everything that is permissible according to Islamic law. However in Spain, as in the rest of Europe, the term has been incorporated into legal terminology and even daily language in certain contexts to refer almost exclusively to food. In particular it evokes prohibitions on the consumption of certain foods, namely alcohol and pork, as well as rules governing the sacrifice of animals.**

The influence of the *halal* system is also evident in many routine aspects of food consumption, since it has produced extensive Islamic jurisprudence in the form of fatwas that study and advise European Muslims on their habits and on how they can adapt their practice of Islam in non-Muslim countries, on matters ranging from food to financial entities.

The demand for a whole series of consumer products that respect the Shari'a has given rise to a new and varied offer of daily food products sold in both small retail outlets and large supermarkets specifically aimed at Muslim consumers: from meat to ice cream or tinned products, all with the *halal* guarantee. In addition to the daily consumption of these special foods, there are also Islamic banks and a few savings banks offering financial products in accordance with the recommendations of prestigious Muslim lawyers, thus attracting Muslim consumers.

Under Spanish law, the 1992 Cooperation Agreement established the basis for regulating the sale of *halal* food products, which must always comply with existing legal and health regulations, and established the CIE as the authority responsible for controlling the sale, import and export

of *halal* products. It also recognizes Muslims' right for public centres and establishments, as well as military facilities and state and private schools and colleges to respect prohibitions on their consumption of certain foods and to adapt time-tables during the month of Ramadan.

In 1998, the Junta Islámica, a pioneering national association of the Muslim association in Spain, set up the Halal Institute, with the approval of other similar entities in Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Since 2003, it has offered companies and consumers control services and a *halal* guarantee certificate that is not exclusive to Spain as its products are also imported from Islamic countries to cater for the demands of Muslim consumers. In 2008, Junta Islámica also launched the consumer association, Vida Halal, to promote

and raise awareness among not just Muslims but society in general regarding the benefits of consuming *halal* food products and to inform consumers of products it classifies as healthy.

In order to provide information on *halal* products, Ihsan, the Islamic Community of the Balearic Islands, has started organising activities aimed at Muslim associations to promote products available to Muslims on the islands and thus comply with the Islamic law on permissible food products.

Schools, university canteens, hospitals and public centres are also gradually adapting their menus to cater to the demands of Muslim diets, suggesting that Muslim practices are being integrated into normal daily life.

#### For more information, see:

Joan Lacomba. **El Islam inmigrado. Transformaciones y adaptaciones de las prácticas culturales y religiosas.** Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deportes, 2001.

Gemma Aubarell & Ricard Zapata. **Inmigración y procesos de cambio.** Barcelona: Icaria/IEMed, 2004.

<http://institutohalal.wordpress.com>

<http://www.vidahalal.com>

[www.juntaislamica.org](http://www.juntaislamica.org)



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# 3

## Increasing urban visibility. Mosques, oratories and cemeteries



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## Mosques and oratories

Since the seventies, Islam in Spain has gradually woven a growing community network formed mainly by religious associations and oratories. The social visibility of the heterogeneous Muslim community is largely the result of the establishment of these places of worship, although most are not located in buildings constructed specifically for that purpose. Most Muslim oratories respond to a desire on the part of Muslims in Spain to organise their own places of worship. Only large centres receive financial contributions from Islamic countries. Other places of worship depend on support from volunteers and community

solidarity, and remain open and are maintained with limited materials and human resources.

Spanish legislation recognizes the right of nationals and foreigners to establish places of worship. In the specific case of mosques, Article 2 of the 1992 Cooperation Agreement between the Spanish State and the Islamic Commission of Spain states that “the buildings or premises permanently and exclusively dedicated to Islamic prayer, training or spiritual support shall, for all legal intents and purposes, be considered to be mosques and places of worship of the Islamic Communities members of the Islamic Commission of Spain, when such

use is certified by the community in question and endorsed by the aforementioned Commission.”

It is estimated that Spain has about 400 oratories and 13 large Islamic centres. While the former may be defined as local spaces situated in neighbourhoods where Muslim communities live and in premises that are not always suitably conditioned for collective worship, the latter occupy noteworthy buildings that stand out in their immediate urban context and are therefore clearly visible.

In Ceuta and Melilla, given the strong Muslim presence in these cities, it is logical to expect mosques to occupy important buildings. In Ceuta, the Marabout of Sidi M'barik, the Mulay El Mehdi Mosque on Avenida de África and the modern al-Umma Mosque are grand examples of the varied local Muslim architecture. Melilla, in addition to the Central Mosque on Calle García Cabrelles (1945), has another twelve mosques and small oratories situated in the Muslim Cemetery.

On peninsular Spain, the Marabout in the Colón gardens was the first Muslim oratory in modern times, built during the Franco regime in Cordoba as a sign of gratitude to soldiers from the Rif who fought alongside Francoist forces during the Spanish Civil War. Over time, its connection to the Civil War has faded and it now stands as home to the plural Muslim Association of Cordoba, formed by Muslim families of different origins. Since 1992, it has organised religious activities and Arab language and Islamic culture classes for children.

The first mosque built on the Peninsula after the transition to democracy was the one in Marbella (Malaga) in 1981. It was financed by the Saudi prince Salman Ben Abdulaziz al-Saud and has a capacity of

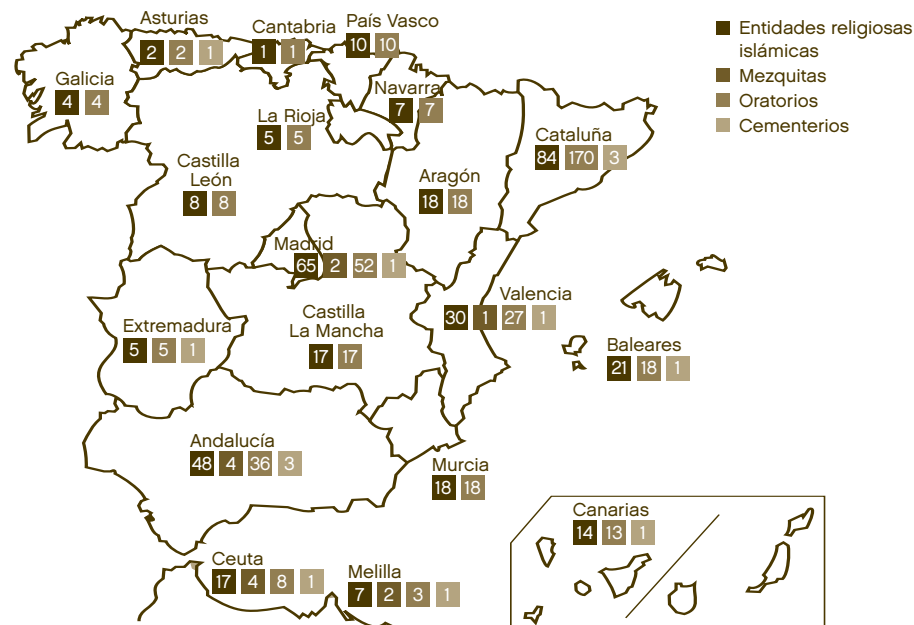
approximately 400 people, a library and 25-m high minaret. In September 1982, the Ahmadiyya Mission in Spain inaugurated the Basharat Mosque in Pedro Abad (Cordoba).

The Abu Bakr Mosque in the Madrid district of Estrecho was built in the mid eighties. It is the headquarters of the Muslim Association of Spain and the UCIDE. It has a total surface area of 3,500 m<sup>2</sup>, distributed on four floors, and a minaret. Construction was financed with contributions from a variety of Arab countries. The Omar ibn al-Jattab Mosque – popularly known as the Islamic Cultural Center of Madrid or M-30 mosque due to its proximity to one of Madrid's main ring roads – was inaugurated in 1992. The inauguration ceremony was attended by the King and Queen of Spain. The 16,000-m<sup>2</sup> plot has a modern six-storey building and was ceded to the district of Concepción by the Madrid City Council. The mosque has a surface area of 550 m<sup>2</sup> and a capacity for 700 men and 130 women. It was financed by King Fahd Ben Abdulaziz al-Saud. Until the inauguration of the Rome mosque in 1997, the Madrid mosque was the largest mosque in Europe.

The Islamic Cultural Center of Valencia was inaugurated a few months later in the same year. Construction was financed by funds from Kuwaiti and belongs to the Organization of Arab Cities, an NGO founded in 1967 to conserve Arab heritage and the identity of Arab cities and municipalities. The Fuengirola Mosque, headquarters of the Suhail Islamic Community, was inaugurated in 1994 with Saudi funding. It is linked to the League of the Islamic World.

The Azzagra Cultural Association complex in La Puebla de Don Fadrique (Granada) occupies a 120-ha plot and includes the Rosales Mosque and a centre for Andalusí studies. It was inaugurated in July 2001 and was funded by the Emir of Sharjah.

### Geographical distribution



Source: Andalusí Observatory (UCIDE, 2006), except Catalonia (Directorate General of Religious Affairs, Regional Government of Catalonia)

In July 2003, the so-called “Great Mosque” of Granada was opened after two decades of controversy regarding its management and location in the Albaicín district of Granada. The personal commitment of certain stakeholders and financial support from different Islamic countries (Libya, Morocco, Arab Emirates and Malaysia) enabled construction work to be completed. The centre is managed by the *Fundación Mezquita de Granada* and is run by members of the Islamic Community of Spain, formed by Spaniards converted to Islam belonging to the Morabitun World Movement. However, the mosque is open to all Muslims from Granada, organises many activities open to community groups in the city and is an important and visible centre of Islam in Granada.

The last great Islamic centre was completed in Malaga in August 2007. It has a total surface area of more than 4,000 m<sup>2</sup>, and construction work cost around 22 million euros to build. Construction was financed by Saudi monies. This new mosque belongs to the Suhail Foundation and has a capacity for more than 1,000 faithful and modern facilities including a nursery, auditorium, separate halls for men and women, as well as simultaneous translation equipment.

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## The community dimension of mosques

**The appearance of oratories is one of the main indicators of the establishment of Muslim immigrant communities. The opening of these oratories expresses a collective desire to maintain not only religious but also social and identity-related**

**references. The importance of the inauguration of such places of worship is different to the opening of such facilities in Muslim countries. These oratories are much more than places of worships due to the contextual circumstances that lead to their creation, the absence of an administrative body to supervise the opening of these centres, the functions acquired by non-Muslims in these spaces and the expectations they generate. In addition to being places for prayer, mosques are common social spaces of reference.**

It is very significant that most oratories opened in Spain have been promoted by members of the so-called “first generation” of immigrants who decided to open these oratories partly to maintain links and references with the society of origin. For immigrants, mosques have become spaces for meeting and exchange.

For the promoters of these mosques – mainly adult men and fathers – mosques become the link that connects communities with their societies of origin and their values, logic and social practices. Mosques may therefore be defined and presented as havens for maintaining these links, which they consider must not be lost; hence, the importance given to the socialisation function of these spaces. Mosques or oratories are places that, together with families, guarantee the religious socialisation of new generations and create a space where people can express a common sense of belonging.

Within this idea of reconstitution, and the emphasis placed on the socialisation of new generations, mosques aim to be centres of social activity and community life for Muslims. However, despite the intentions of their promoters, the supposed social centrality of mosques must be qualified. The religious element of mosques is not the only structuring reference present

in communities of Muslim origin. There are also other civic, cultural or political initiatives that give these communities their own entity and identity.

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## The challenges of institutional visibility

**As initially intended by their promoters, oratories are local places that can be visited daily by people in the neighbourhoods where they live or work. These places of religious worship, together with associations or retail outlets, are closely related due to their territorial proximity where common references converge. Their spatial concentration in certain neighbourhoods or parts of cities therefore enhances their visibility in Spanish society.**

Mosques are a visible element of Spanish public life yet they retain a sense of community as well as intimacy in the eyes of the rest of society, which acknowledges them in each territory but treats them as specifically Muslim. There have been some protests throughout Spain against the opening of mosques. The reasons for these conflicts are often complex, but they typically denote a rejection to the presence of immigrants. Nevertheless, by opening their own places of worship these immigrants demonstrate an explicit desire to remain and integrate in this society. This rejection is accompanied by claims of fear of a presence identified as strange, unknown and suspicious. The intense media focus that links the Islamic world with violence and terrorism has not helped calm the situation in this respect.

An analysis of these conflicts reveals the following. Local pressure has –on more

than one occasion– forced initial political decisions to be reformulated in order to find alternatives to meet the demands of Muslim communities. Attempts to find alternative locations for oratories have come up against similar protests, prompting city councils to propose locations in industrial or peripheral areas, far from urban centres. These proposals for the spatial and symbolic delocalisation of Muslim oratories are probably as harmful as the effects on the degree of social integration of these collectives in municipal life.

The controversy surrounding the location of mosques suggests that society’s public reaction to this new reality is problematic. This is normally seen as a problem of social integration, in this case due to failure by the one party (the host society) to fulfil the commitment it has undertaken to accept the right of these communities to freely express their chosen religion. In spite of this problem, initiatives are being developed to resolve such controversy through social co-existence, supporting the creation of “open house” days to dilute fears of the unknown and explain the reality of those spaces. This offers new ways of addressing a question that must be understood not so much as the *adaptation* of Islam to Spanish society but as the *acceptance* of Muslims as a religious minority.

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## Changes and expectations

**Mosques as institutions face new dynamics that will condition their immediate future as references for Spanish Muslims. Mosques can clearly not cater adequately for all the demands of Muslim communities from a spatial (due to the growing Muslim population,**

making existing spaces too small) and sociological (new circumstances arising in the observance of Islam within a non-Muslim context) standpoint. Furthermore, the scarcity of material, financial and human resources in the accommodation of religious needs of Muslim immigrants has become chronic, to the point that the improvement of conditions of collective practice (availability of larger facilities, recruitment of personnel, development of social projects) is seriously undermined. In addition, the relationship with new generations remains unresolved, since young Muslims remain distant from mosques despite continuing to express their adherence to a specific religion. The generational gap takes place when their religious identity is not necessarily defined according to the references learned from their parents' original society but rather as part of their life experience and desire to belong to Spanish society.

Other aspects that may condition the evolution of these spaces derive from internal struggles for the control of mosques. Mosques are always complicated spaces to administer. The leadership of boards responsible for administering mosques is often undermined by public criticism from the community, and mosque leaders are not always able to find adequate replacements from new generations of Muslims to take over the running of mosques.

In short, far from being consolidated as a reference institution, Muslim oratories are still spaces under construction, both literally and figuratively, where internal and external debates on the Muslim community and its integration in Spanish society converge. Therefore, mosques remain important centres in the configuration of Islam in Spain.

## Islamic cemeteries

Spanish law recognizes the right of all citizens to receive funeral rites according to their personal religious, philosophical and cultural beliefs. This is established in Article 2.1b of the Organic Law on Religious Freedom of 1980 and other autonomous community and local legislation and orders on funeral rites. The Cooperation Agreement signed between the Spanish State and the Islamic Commission of Spain recognizes a Muslim's right to have a plot in a municipal cemetery for burial in accordance with Islamic funeral rites (Article 2.5).

Now, sixteen years after this right was legally acknowledged, Muslim communities need more reserved plots in Spanish public cemeteries due to growth of the Muslim population and the establishment and social integration of the community. Unfortunately, there are still not enough plots for deceased Muslims, except in the cities of Ceuta and Melilla. Due to the lack of plots and the real difficulty inherent in providing more burial space, most Muslims decide to repatriate their deceased to the country of origin. Failure to satisfy the need for space, even though this is a recognised right, undermines any expression of a desire for recognition of the notable influence of a people who have lived in Spain for a long time and also the religious plurality of Spanish society, since the rights of Spanish Muslims are not carried out.

Spanish banks and other institutions from the countries of origin offer repatriation services through insurances. Thus, when the country is as close as Morocco, the repatriation of the deceased is made as far as possible, and the Muslims who are far from their country of origin (Pakistan, Bangladesh etc.), often solicit that the burial takes place in Spain. It is notable that the repatriation of the deceased is

more common among the first generation of immigrants.

Some existing cemeteries are vestiges of the past, built during the Spanish Civil War to bury the bodies of Moroccan combatants who fought alongside Francoist troops (e.g. the cemeteries in Seville and Granada). These were practically abandoned until the seventies and eighties, when communities of Spanish Muslims began claiming their right to use the plots again. There are other cemeteries like the Griñón cemetery in Madrid, created after the Civil War to bury dead from the Moorish Guard now managed by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco. Initially intended for the burial of deceased members of diplomatic delegations from Muslim countries, burials of other members of the Muslim community have also been permitted. As a result, this cemetery is currently at the limit of its capacity.

With more new Muslim immigrants settling definitively in Spain, the need has arisen for more cemetery plots to bury deceased Muslims. The Muslim Cemetery of Granada was reopened in October 2002 for this reason. In accordance with the requirements established in the 1992 Law, plots have been reserved in municipal cemeteries for Muslim burials. In 1997, Barcelona City Council reserved a 552-m<sup>2</sup> plot at the Collserola cemetery for use specifically by Muslims. In Madrid, an agreement between the UCIDE and the autonomous community government will increase the capacity of the existing cemetery. In Valencia, a 700-m<sup>2</sup> plot was also allocated for Muslim burials, with a capacity for 145 graves. Plots have also been reserved at cemeteries in Benalmádena (Malaga), Zaragoza, Palma de Mallorca, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Manresa or Terrassa.

Negotiations currently underway between municipal representatives and Muslim communities aim to reach agreements in

this area in order to authorise new plots and bring existing health regulations in line with Islamic rules governing funeral rites. Thus, in April 2007 Barcelona City Council inaugurated a hall at one of the municipal morgues for Muslims to be able to perform mortuary services required under Islamic law. Similar initiatives including health guides and action protocols have been prepared to cater adequately for deceased patients according to their religious beliefs.

The death of an immigrant has completely different consequences in the country of destination than in the society of origin. The impact of loss within a family nucleus or among friends is aggravated by the

### Cooperation Agreement with the Islamic Commission of Spain (Law 26/1992, of 12 November, Article 2.5)

"Muslim cemeteries shall be entitled to the legal benefits laid down in paragraph 2 of this article for places of worship. Islamic Communities that are members of the Islamic Commission of Spain are entitled to assign the plots reserved for Islamic burials in municipal cemeteries, as well as to own private Muslim cemeteries. All due measures shall be adopted to observe traditional Islamic rules regarding burials, graves and funeral rites, which shall be conducted by the local Islamic Community. The right to transfer the remains of the Muslim deceased to cemeteries belonging to the Islamic Communities, both from tombs in municipal cemeteries and from towns in which there is no Muslim cemetery, is hereby acknowledged, subject to the provisions of legislation on local government and health ordinances."

fact that the deceased person's relatives are far away. This prompts an initial question regarding the decision to either bury the deceased person in the place where he or she has died or repatriate the body to the country of origin. Each scenario has new cultural significance: the death of an immigrant offers genuine possibilities to reaffirm personal identity, either linked to the society where the individual was born (repatriation to be buried *there*, as a form of reconciliation with one's homeland) or to the society in which the person has aged and his or her children have grown up and been educated (burial understood as the definitive expression of a desire for integration).

#### For more information, see:

Elena Arigita. "Representing Islam in Spain: Muslim Identities and the Contestation of Leadership". **Muslim World**, 96, 4 (October 2006), 571-575.

**Imams d'Europa. Les expressions de l'Autoritat**

**Religiosa islàmica.** Barcelona: IEMed, 2005.

Jordi Moreras. **Musulmanes en Barcelona: Espacios y dinámicas comunitarias.** Barcelona: CIDOB, 1999.

Ana Planet and Jordi

Moreras. **Islam e Inmigración.** Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2008.

Silvia Taulés. **La nueva España musulmana.** Barcelona: Debolsillo, 2004.





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# 4

## Muslim women. Myths and realities



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In Spain and the western world in general, all issues relating to Muslim women are highly conditioned by the media due to a prevailing social perception that focuses more on the “women and Islam” link or “women victims of Islam” than their characteristically complex and diverse reality. Women are frequently used to illustrate a “perceived” cultural landscape that reconfirms the “agreed Western paradigm on Islam” as distant, passive, exotic, submissive, veiled and reacting to events instead of participating actively in them. They are seen as impersonal and communitarised women. As a result, information on Muslim women is predominately associated with symbols of great ideological importance such as the veil or Islamic fundamentalism. As in other Western European communities, patriarchal structures in Muslim communities are seen as the basis for most episodes of gender inequality and discrimination. An important question regarding this issue is that this patriarchy is perceived as something unalterable and inevitable, the result of cultural determinism. Why is it difficult to understand that patriarchal structures can also be transformed in Muslim societies, as has occurred in European countries, and that this depends mainly on democratisation, development and the possibility these societies have to define themselves without having to define their societies from the West? Why is it so difficult to understand that the dividing line between the new, visible generation of women who affirm their position and the previous, invisible and submissive generation may depend more on levels of access to education than on wearing a veil?

The many different Muslim women who live in Spain have very different personal backgrounds, and include female immigrant entrepreneurs, women who have individually decided to emigrate of their

own accord and whose main goal may be to form families, pursue careers or be reunited with their husbands, as well as university students and girls already reunited with their families or born in Spain. They all may have very different educational, labour and professional backgrounds and different personal experiences with different levels of community integration or participation according to their personal aspirations and the favourable or aggressive social context in which they live. We must also not forget converted Muslim women in Spain, some of whom work very actively to promote “Islamic feminism” in our country, seeking female emancipation without abandoning Muslim religious references, even legitimising this emancipation based on Islamic sources themselves. While this type of Islamic feminism continues to be controversial and contested by other male and female Muslim activists, the sole existence of this debate can be taken as evidence of the static and passive image of Muslim women as an incomplete version of a more lively and complex reality.

For society, the most striking aspect of this complex female universe –or rather the matter of greatest concern– is the visibility of these Muslim women expressed through the use of the veil or *hijab*.

Far from the premature interpretation that portrays veiled woman as submissive and unveiled women as liberal, the clothes worn by Muslim women reveal many signs that need to be deciphered. Veils, for example, come in many different styles and designs. Each has a different meaning but the basic difference being whether or not the face is covered. Veils covering women’s faces reflect traditional and patriarchal ways of life. Of these veils, the most well-known are the *haik* (square cloth veil covering from the nose to the chin, traditional in Maghreb countries), the *niqab* (black veil with two holes for the

eyes, very popular in countries on the Arab Peninsula and among users of this type of veil in the Arab world) and the *burqa* (characteristic Afghan veil). The term *hijab* is a generic term that means veil, covering or curtain and is the term used in the Koran to describe the respectful separation that should be maintained between women and the Prophet. Today this term is used to refer to the headscarf most commonly used by Muslim women who choose to make their Muslim identity visible (their religious, cultural and even political identity). The *hijab* is basically a headscarf (worn in very different ways) that does not cover the woman’s face. Clearly visible, it is obvious and public sign of her Muslim identity. Although there are many different cases involving *hijab*, including cases of women forced to wear veils, for the women who voluntarily wear them this does not necessarily mean that they have accepted the patriarchal principle of submission to men. Instead, it is a sign of their cultural identity and adherence to the Muslim faith. In other words, the *hijab* is the Arab term that Europeans frequently use to refer to headscarves even though these are not strictly veils.

A representative number of women do not use the *hijab* as a symbol of the traditional transmission of religion but rather as a sign of their reappropriation of Islam as a cultural identity. Headscarves have enjoyed a strong revival and are a characteristic phenomenon in big cities and among professional and educated women.

The negative image frequently transmitted regarding the use of the *hijab* ignores the conscious and deliberate adherence of millions women to their Islamic identity. This does not mean that all Muslim women feel the same way, but rather that the differences between them are not established according to the criterion of Islamic woman = traditional and backward

woman, Westernised woman = modern woman. The reality behind this stereotype (deduced from their clothing and specifically from a traditionalist or rigorist attitude towards veils) is that the hypothetical separation between “traditional” and “modern” women differentiates between “Islamic” and “non-Islamic” women. Today, the element that distinguishes between “traditional” and “modern” Muslim women is not the use of the *hijab*, and the different types of *hijab* are not always purely religious because they may have also different sociological manifestations. Many Muslim women today, typically young, urban and educated, are changing their traditional patriarchal status using Islamic socio-cultural references to achieve their goals.

This reality should remind us that not everything in the Muslim societies stems from a religious determinism with a propensity for fanaticism and regression but rather that specific processes of change and modernization are underway that do not exclude the affirmation of Islamic identity.

Empirical studies on immigrant Muslim women show that their cultural and religious identity is not necessarily undermined by their decision to settle in a foreign country with a different experience, but this can often lead to a process of reconstruction and fluidity in their Muslim identity, combining elements of the societies of destination and origin. They do not normally abandon their religious practice or cultural identification with Islam as they become more independent and emancipated. Young educated women in particular distinguish between patriarchal traditions, which they reject, and their adherence to Islam. In other words, their rejection of the customs that subject them to discriminatory social codes (a rejection they can obviously affirm and articulate better in Spain than in their countries of origin) is

not necessarily associated with a detachment from their Muslim identity.

For some of these women, Islam is a way of belonging to the community, part of their culture and identity and a daily practice. This does not mean that they automatically embrace the patriarchal traditions which some Muslims attributed to Islam. All in all, Islam is conceived as a belief and a practice, a sign of identity and construction of the self, and not so much as a socially unalterable way of life. This is much less so when certain expressions of this way of life are considered to be imposed by family or within ethnic groups.

However, empirical observations suggest that although women may not express or conceive their experience in this way, they are to a certain extent redefining or reconstructing their personal experiences in real life after arriving in Spain. This does not rule out the possibility that this reconstruction was already underway prior to migration but it is clear that this process is better defined in the new context of Spanish society.

Identity is not diluted but transformed, insofar as it does not prevent the defense of personal autonomy and freedom. This opinion is also shared by some men who believe that certain signs of identity must be conserved so they can be passed onto their children. They are aware that this can be achieved by accepting inevitable social transformations within the new context of emigration.

The condition both Muslim men and women face as a minority forces them to reconsider who they are and how they must adapt to this new reality, which is something they do automatically and inherit in their countries of origin. In this context, women play a key role as intercultural mediators, as a bridge between Muslims in the country of origin and Muslims in the country of destination, without losing either of these two references.

In any case, Muslim women should be seen as an important part of European society, not just for the *hijab* issue but also for issues of education and labour as they are keys to their future success in Spain.

#### For more information, see:

Gema Martín Muñoz y Ana López Sala. **Mujeres musulmanas en España: el caso de la inmigración femenina marroquí.** Madrid: Instituto de la Mujer, 2003.

Gema Martín Muñoz. "Imágenes e Imaginarios. La representación de la mujer musulmana a

través de los medios de comunicación en Occidente" en A. Valcárcel y D. Renau (eds.). **Los desafíos del feminismo ante el siglo XXI.** Sevilla: Instituto andaluz de la Mujer, 2000.

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# 5

## Young muslims. Education, associations, debates



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**Young Muslims living in Spain exemplify the rich diversity of people and ways of thinking characteristic of believers in Islam. Age is not the only criterion used to define young Muslims because they may include young people who, having entered early adulthood, are aware of their social status as young people because they continue to be influenced in their everyday lives by the socio-economic and family characteristics of other youths in the country. These conditions may include extended time in school, financial difficulties due to unstable or the lack of employment, little or no financial and family independence, inability to obtain housing, etc. All these circumstances result in the presence of young Muslims in the Spanish compulsory education system but also in universities and in the labour market. Moreover, young people's awareness of their social status encourages their socio-political participation from that perspective.**

As a result of the demographic changes that have taken place in Spain over the past few years, many people see Muslim youths as children of recent immigrants. This may be true to a certain extent, but not entirely. These young people may be Spaniards by birth (Muslims according to family tradition or converted Muslims), Spaniards who are the children of immigrants nationalised after one year's residence after birth and descendants of foreigners who have not yet obtained Spanish nationality and who emigrated of their own free will or in order to reunite families, immigrants attending Spanish universities or those who have already completed their studies and have stayed in Spain after finding employment. These young people or their parents are mainly from Spain, Morocco, Algeria, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Palestine. Their relatives may come from different social classes. In total, it is estimated that there are approximately 100,000 young Muslims in Spain.

The gradual increase in the number of young Muslims in Spain, the discrepancies between estimates due to various sources, and the difficulty in keeping accurate registers, show that statistics should only be treated as approximates and greater attention must be given to the daily circumstances and spaces occupied by these young Muslims, mainly schools and new associations they are promoting as both young people and Muslims.

It is noteworthy to mention the generational clash expressed in religious practices in the mosques. The younger generation coming from Muslim countries have a religious education more intellectualized than that of their parents, who were taught in a more traditional and customary way. This clash is revealed through intergenerational tensions and disagreements on religious practice, the management of mosques and the organization of social and intercommunitarian activities. This has provoked substantial divisions inside the community, at times favouring the younger generation and at times, the older generation.

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### Learning about Islam at school

**The number of young Muslims in the Spanish educational system has gradually increased since the nineteen eighties. They have become more visible at the start of the century since the number of Muslim children has increased due to family reunifications or births in Spain.**

Like families seeking Catholic religious and moral education under the protection of Article 27 of the Spanish Constitution, Muslims have also tried to obtain the same right for their children according to their own convictions. This claim was legally acknowledged and regulated in the

Cooperation Agreement signed by the Spanish State and the Islamic Commission of Spain, with the State assuming the following commitment before Muslims (Article 10): "Muslim pupils, their parents and any school governing bodies who so request, are guaranteed the right to receive Islamic religious teaching in public and private subsidised schools at the infant, primary and secondary education levels, providing, in the case of private institutions, that the exercise of such right does not conflict with the nature of the school itself."

It has been difficult to implement the final section of the article on the religious teaching of Islam in private, state-subsidised schools because many of these schools in Spain are Catholic and have therefore taken advantage of the contradiction between the Catholic and Islamic education. Furthermore, there are no private state-subsidised schools currently teaching Islam and proposals to set up such centres are rejected by those who want strictly secular education with no space for any religion in the school curriculum.

As a result, the parents of Muslim students who want their children to receive Islamic religious education during school hours can only choose between private centres (notably the Saudi College and the Libyan College in Madrid) and public centres, which are also affected by the social debate on the status of religion in the school curriculum and on financing measures to provide such education.

Most young Muslims actually attend state schools. These, in turn, have restrictions on the number of students who can study Islamic religion because they are only obliged to offer this subject if a minimum of ten students ask to take it.

The Study Programme of Islamic Religious Teaching in State and State-subsidised Schools was published in January 1996

and followed in April the same year by the signing of the Agreement on the Appointment and Remuneration of Teachers of Islamic Religious Education in State Primary and Secondary Schools. This established that the CIE was responsible for appointing teachers of Islamic religion, while the State would be responsible for paying the salaries of Islamic religion teachers working at state schools. However, the adoption of this agreement was put on hold until 2002 due to internal discrepancies within the CIE. A list of 200 teachers was later agreed and this number was increased in the academic year 2005/2006, when Islamic religion was first offered in schools across Ceuta, Melilla, the Basque Country, Aragon and Andalusia.

The most significant event took place in October 2006 with the publication of the first text book on Islamic religion published in Europe, entitled *Descubrir el Islam* ("Discovering Islam"). Its publication was possible thanks to the collaboration between the UCIDE and the Pluralism and Coexistence Foundation, the Directorate General of Religious Affairs of the Spanish Ministry of Justice and the publishing group SM. It is intended for primary school pupils and will be complemented, in subsequent years, with the publication of the text book *Knowing Islam* ("Conocer el Islam") for secondary education (ESO) and higher secondary education (Bachillerato) students.

Due to the amount of time required to implement these measures, Islamic religious instruction has been given mainly in mosques, Islamic cultural centres and within families. At the end of 2007, the *Observatorio Andalusi* (Andalusí Observatory) reported that 90% of Muslim students did not receive Islamic religion classes. This follows the trend in other European countries, where Muslim parents prefer religious instruction to be extracurricular as classes are not offered at state schools.

## Young Muslims participate

**The age and number of young Muslims born in Spain or nationalised after a process of family reunification are two factors that have traditionally undermined visibility through their social participation in associations. However, national visibility increased in 2002 with the registration of the *Asociación Hijos de Inmigrantes Sababia* (Sababia Immigrant Children's Association), a process reaching its zenith after the attacks of March 11, 2004, in Madrid. Many young people, shocked by those dramatic events, rejected the way in which their religion was identified with the terrorist attacks and decided to adopt a more active social role. As a result, they formed an association to strengthen their visibility. By participating in public acts to reject violence and terrorism and organising activities, seminars, workshops and conferences, they wanted to reflect on peaceful ways of understanding their religion and on the meaning they attributed to the concept of Islam as religious devotion as opposed to the negative images that were saturating the public.**

This phenomenon was not exclusive to Madrid; it has had multiple effects in different countries and is still fuelling the creation of new associations with the same characteristics and objectives as the members of associations formed in the Spanish capital. These associations are mainly formed by the children of immigrants from Muslim countries (born in Spain or arriving in the country to reunite with their families), students (mainly Moroccans who plan to emigrate and/or study) and young Spaniards who have converted to Islam. They are workers, university students, diploma holders, graduates, post-graduates and doctorates. This diversity of personal experiences is also reflected in the different associations registered with the Spanish Ministry of the

Interior, such as the Association of Iranian Muslim Students, the Sababia Immigrant Children's Association, the Association of Muslim Youths from Madrid and Tayba, or in the different autonomous communities, such as the Association of Moroccan University Students in Madrid or the Mei Al-Hanan Association (Association of Women for Intercultural Education) in Barcelona and the Al Agua Cultural Youth Association with centres in Cordoba, Granada and Barcelona.

This participation may be through socio-cultural and youth associations (if they register with the Spanish Ministry of the Interior or the corresponding autonomous community delegations) or Muslim places of worship (if they register with the Spanish Ministry of Justice). The decision to register with either the Spanish Ministry of the Interior or the autonomous community depends on the activities performed by the association and the financing they receive to carry out these activities. These associations are also social spaces, open to the whole of society because they are not simply socio-cultural entities. Religious entities, on the other hand, are solely for strict followers of Islam, i.e. persons of the Muslim faith.

These two possibilities mean that their demands for social recognition as Muslims can be presented at two different administrative levels –and not only religious contexts–, sometimes giving rise to registers of socio-cultural associations with the term “Muslim” in their names. This choice, also visible among young European Muslims, shows that this sense of belonging to the society allows them, through their common Muslim identity, to avoid any identification of national origin that may create internal divisions or automatically label them as aliens or foreigners.

This same desire to show their sense of belonging prompts them to individually,

and like most young people, choose to join existing organizations and/or associations as interested citizens, regardless of their faith.

This interest in emphasizing their status as citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs, means that the statutes of some associations allow non-Muslims to become members. Examples include the Tayba Association, the Association of Moroccan University Students, the Mei Al-Hanan Association and the Al Agua Cultural Youth Association. These four associations seek to establish an inter-religious dialogue or inter-cultural coexistence that presents Islam as a peaceful religion rather than the stereotyped image of Muslims as the enemy, and aim to promote social, religious and cultural coexistence. This interest is shared by the other associations and is also expressed by the coordinator of the Bidaya Association of Young Muslims, a group formed by young Muslim women based in Santurce, in Biscay.

The association Ibn Batutta has about thousand young members in Barcelona, Madrid and Valencia, according to their representatives. This association also collaborates with the National Youth Council and with the Youth Council of Catalonia to on issues of youth development.

With this objective, the members of these associations collaborate with other Muslim and non-Muslim associations that reject violence and terrorism. They also work together to call for a solution to the current situation in Palestine, organise activities to promote their religion and the situation of Muslims living in Spain and elsewhere in Europe, organise and participate in social voluntary activities and debate the daily issues they face as students, youths, Muslims, Spanish citizens, etc.

Although most of these associations do not have a standard profile, most of their members are young Muslim women, meaning that they focus very much on matters relating to the role of women in Islam.

These associations have also decided not to limit their activities to the local level, establishing links with one another at national and international levels. An example of this new trend – in contrast to previous stages in the associative movement – is the NGO *Life Makers*. This social youth movement, with representatives in different Spanish cities (including, Barcelona, Mataró, Ceuta, Valencia and Granada), takes advantage of the immediacy of new technologies to establish links and communicate with the movement's members and representatives based in other European countries and in Arab countries (Sunna 'al-Hayat). This allows them to build new transnational dynamics, sometimes inspired by the Egyptian preacher Amr Khaled, who became an influential media leader on the satellite television channel Iqra' and whose success has been compared to that of the North American television preachers. Khaled, who is self-taught in the Islamic sciences, bases his success on the combination of a modern Western style, personal achievement and a message advocating pietism and orthodoxy in the private observance of religious precepts.

Since socio-cultural associations can only be set up by persons of legal age, minors may choose to participate in Muslim religious entities or communities where they can benefit from cultural and religious activities organised by adult members.

The appearance of these young people in associations has prompted a qualitative change in the predominant form of Muslim associationism until the late nineties. Thus, in addition to the traditional classification that distinguished between

immigrant Muslims who came to Spain before the transition to democracy (mainly from Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Palestine), Spaniards converted to Islam and immigrants from Muslim countries who lived in Spain in the final two decades of the 20th century, new registered associations formed by young Muslims, mainly the children of immigrants, represent the fourth tier of Muslim associations.

Since these associations are relatively new, their presence has not yet acquired its real importance. From a broader perspective, they can also be identified with the claims and behaviour of other young Muslims associations in Europe. Their two main characteristics are an interest in deepening their knowledge of Islam without being identified as "extremists", "radicals" or "fundamentalists" and in consolidating their social status, not as foreigners but as members of a recognised religious group in their country.

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## Debates

In general, there is a tendency to copy and even transfer to Spain the debates that take place in other European countries in relation to the socio-economic situation and politics of these young people. As young people –like all young people, both Muslims and non-Muslims– they are seen in a contradictory way: either as passive, fragile and easily-manipulated actors (associated with drugs, delinquency, failure at school, ideological and religious radicalisation, etc.) or as potential agents of change in the process of adaptation to the society in which they live. As Muslims, they tend to be associated by the media, administrative authorities and state politicians with two issues that have mobilised

**public opinion and determined their visibility in a rather schematic manner: the use of the *hijab* in schools; and ideological "radicalisation", linked especially to delinquency, unemployment and alienation.**

These issues are often treated with a certain detachment and with the notion that Spain does not yet have enough young Muslims compared with other countries, considering that they have not yet created problems because these do not exist or because these young people are not old enough to create such problems. This means that a portion of the population is not only wrongly attributed a problematic profile but considered nonexistent in our context. Their existence and largely normal integration in Spanish society means they are only treated as a present reality in relation to the use of the hijab, or as a presumed potential source of future "radicalism". Their definition as an inevitable problem in the future should alert us to the growing social alarm and potential undercurrent of intolerance against Muslims. Their treatment more as foreigners than as Spanish citizens subtly deprives them of their legal rights and duties. For this reason we have included a chapter on young Muslims in this guide, to ensure they are not forgotten as an important part of the present and future of Spanish society, of their society.

### For more information, see:

Rosa Aparicio & Andrés Tornos. **Hijos de inmigrantes que se hacen adultos: marroquíes, dominicanos, peruanos.** Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales. Documentos del Observatorio permanente de la inmigración nº 8, 2003.

Mohammed Chaib. **Ética para una Convivencia. Pensar la inmigración. El islam en casa.** Barcelona:

La esfera de los Libros, 2005.

Asociación cultural juvenil Al Agua (Al Agua Cultural Youth Association)  
[www.alagua.org](http://www.alagua.org)

Asociación de Jóvenes Musulmanas 'Bidaya' (Bidaya Young Muslims Association)  
<http://bidaya.nireblog.com>

Asociación de Jóvenes Musulmanes de Madrid

(Association of Young Muslims in Madrid)  
[www.jovenesmusulmanes.es](http://www.jovenesmusulmanes.es)

Asociación socio-cultural Tayba (Tayba Sociocultural Association)  
<http://asocstayba.blogspot.com>

Forjadores de Vida (Life Makers)  
<http://groups.msn.com/ForjadoresdeVida>



# 6

## Images and the imaginary. Muslims in the media

The screenshot shows the homepage of the website 'Attawassul'. At the top, there is a decorative banner with the title 'التواصل Attawassul' and the subtitle 'LA REVISTA DE LA ASOCIACION SOCIO-CULTURAL BEN MARIYA'. Below this, it states 'Una revista digital de carácter mensual' and 'AMANE CER del nuevo siglo'. There is a search bar with the text 'Encuentra en Amanecer' and a 'Buscar' button. A navigation menu includes links for 'Número actual', 'Número anteriores', 'Acerca de Amanecer', 'la Columna del Director', 'Publicidad', 'Propuestas', and 'Enlaces'. At the bottom, there is a logo for 'WEBIslam comunidad virtual' and a footer with the date 'Martes 23 de Septiembre de 2008 - 23 Ramadan 1429' and the time 'Actualizado a las 09:06 P. - 329 usuarios en línea'. A secondary navigation bar at the very bottom lists categories like 'Portada', 'Artículos', 'Videos', 'Noticias', 'Biblioteca', 'Manuscritos', 'Dosieres', 'Agenda', 'Audio', 'Directorio', 'Glosario', 'Participación', 'Qur'an', 'Salaat', 'Hemeroteca', 'Fotogalerías', 'Imagen y texto', 'Radio', and 'Donar'.



**During the last three decades, the issue of Muslims and the media has gone from being practically non-existent to the subject of conferences, articles, books and discussion forums worldwide. The debate grew exponentially after the attacks of September 11 and the Madrid bombings, when a multitude of studies, including those carried out by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), which later became The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), showed an increase in Islamophobia in European countries, where there are an estimated 20 million Muslims, approximately 5.5% of the EU's population. At the same time, the role of Muslims in Europe and European attitudes toward Islam have become high-priority issues on the EU's political agenda, with 2008 being the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.**

A Gallup poll published during the Davos Economic Forum in January 2008 showed that European citizens, concerned about immigration and perceiving Islam as a threat, are alarmed about the prospect of greater interaction with Muslim communities and see these contacts as more of a risk than a benefit. The president of the World Economic Forum, Klaus Schwab, stated that the study reflected "an alarmingly low level of optimism regarding dialogue between the West and Islam." The poll also showed that the overriding perception in almost all 21 countries where the survey was carried out was that communication between the West and Muslim communities is worsening.

This situation is preceded by a long history of friction: the publication of the cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, the reactions to the murder of Dutch film maker Theo Van Gogh, numerous racist attacks in France and the United Kingdom or the opposition of many European citizens to Turkey's accession to the EU.

In this context, the responsibility of the media and its role in the portrayal of Muslims is of crucial importance. The media are recognised as an important catalyst of intercultural exchange and a fundamental tool for promoting the value of interculturality and the need for understanding. However, are the media contributing to or harming that process?

These are clearly difficult times for journalists as they face complicated challenges. In many countries around the world, the media are under pressure from governments and politicians seeking to muzzle the press in the name of the so-called "war on terror." As documented by Aidan White, General Secretary of the International Journalists' Federation, in his study entitled "Ethical Journalism Initiative. Quality Half for Diversity and Pluralism", these types of constraints are worsening, especially in developing countries (including Islamic ones) trapped in violence.

Regrettably, White's assessment of the performance of European media is pessimistic. He writes: "few journalists have tried to reflect Europe's racial and ethnic transformation. Sensationalist reporting has contributed to an increasingly fearful climate and mistrust between communities. European media –including broadcasters and Internet-based information outlets– have been especially unable or unwilling to provide a true image of the millions of Muslims who live in Europe."

In Spain, as elsewhere in Europe, Muslims have frequently complained that headlines often transmit a distorted and negative image of Islam, which the media tend to present as a monolithic entity equivalent to terrorism and religious fanaticism. They also complain that the media dedicate very little space to "friendly" news stories on the Muslim world.

This phenomenon is not just a reaction to the attacks in New York, Madrid or London. A study of leading British newspapers carried out by the Muslim Council of Britain in March 1999 revealed that the coverage of the Muslim world was so overwhelmingly negative that the editors of these newspapers could not even believe that the conclusions presented in the aforementioned study were based on stories that had appeared in its own publications.

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## Frequent distortions

**For different and varied reasons, a mutual perception of a remote culture has gradually developed and tends to establish a binary division between "us" and "them" (both "cultures" and both "religions"), as if these were closed and unconnected universes in which millions of human beings who are either "Westerners" or "Muslims" represent totally uniform alien and even antagonistic cultures. This process is very often reflected in the way information or news from Arab and Muslim countries is presented and interpreted.**

The image of masses, almost always associated with violence or fanaticism, prevails over the presence of individuals, eventually casting doubt over the state of civilization of these peoples. Islam is abusively presented as the abstract key that explains the evolution and actions of these peoples, giving less priority to the strongly political and socio-economic factors at the root of these conflicts and tensions. As a result, these conceptions tend to infer that "Islam" is a dominant global force that determines and generalises the behaviour and cultural definition of more than 1.2 billion of its followers. All are One,

independent of diverse ways of life, states, histories, ideologies and cultures present in a vast geographical area extending through Africa and Asia (in addition to the millions of Muslims living and born in western countries).

Given the global media focus on the conflict in the Middle East, the profile of the Islamic "One" or "oneness", supposedly representing "All", is presented as a fanatical and fundamentalist phenomenon. The perception is dominated by orientalist stereotypes and the omnipresence of this region in the media gives our citizens daily images of exceptional and extreme situations, suggesting it represents the majority in those societies, concealing the diversity of these citizens, their processes of change, their efforts to achieve democracy and freedom since it is seemingly of no interest to the media when the term "Islamic" is concerned.

Interestingly, the Arab satellite television channel Al Jazeera has probably been so successful because it caters to Muslims and, in addition to embracing free and independent standards, freeing them from the orientalist stereotypes that prevail in western media.

In addition to reporting on these common issues relating to the Muslim community in Spain, there is still a strong tendency for the media to portray Muslims as immigrants and unqualified Moroccan workers, illegal aliens or immigrants arriving in *pateras* on the Spanish coast. The common representation of immigration, which is often treated as a problem, also portrays everything Muslim as "strange" and "foreign."

A study carried out by the Observatory on Diversity (coordinated by Mugak and XenoMedia in Spain), presented in the European Week of Media & Diversity 2007, reported the following findings:

1. The time dedicated to immigrants and minorities on local Spanish television channels ranges between 0.78% and 2.86% of total programming respectively. In this reduced time slot, the main topics focus on violence and social conflict. Integration and the living conditions of immigrants appear in third place.
2. Their presence of immigrants and minorities on autonomous community channels is higher, at 3.17% and 6.72% of total programming respectively. Aspects relating to the control of immigration, social conflicts and crime account for three quarters of the subjects relating to immigrants.
3. On national channels, these three topics also dominate the coverage of immigrants and minorities.

Due to the lack of more extensive coverage in national generalist media, the Muslim minority has to largely make do with coverage in the media aimed specifically at immigrants in general (typically including Latin Americans, Chinese and Eastern Europeans). Programmes such as *Con otros acentos* on La 2, which promotes the integration of immigrants and examines their problems without distinguishing between their countries of origin, or *Telenoticias Sin Fronteras de TeleMadrid*, which combines news stories of interest to immigrants with news and information on their countries of origin, included Maghreb countries. However, these programmes are broadcasted at times when there are very few viewers.

Apart from these programmes and others developed for autonomous community channels (e.g. *Diferentes Acentos*, Canal Sur; *Els Neus Catalans*, TV3; *Info*, Barcelona Televisió), minorities are virtually invisible in the Spanish media.

## National media vs. own media

**Outside Spain, certain sectors have proposed, as possible solutions to the problem of Muslims and media stereotypes, increasing the number of Muslim journalists taking communication studies and increasing their presence in national generalist media.**

In the United Kingdom, representatives of the BBC's Diversity Department are responsible for ensuring racial and religious minorities are adequately represented among professionals in the corporation and emphasize the importance of earning audience trust by presenting different points of view when covering news stories.

At a meeting held in Seville in 2007 to discuss the multicultural role of public media before the challenge of immigration, Elonka Soros, a member of the BBC's Diversity Department, highlighted the need to reflect on the "true reality" of ethnic minorities because failure to report their concerns in the media leads to "exclusion and isolation." She explained that the BBC "takes note if, for example, Muslim communities are repeatedly portrayed in negative situations and strives to correct this."

There are very few Muslims working in Spanish national media, as there are very few professionals in this field. While it seems counterintuitive, the presence of an Arab and/or Muslim reporter or journalist does not guarantee a fairer representation of the Muslim world, especially if corporations do not take a stand to change the situation. The issue regarding immigrant media is fragmented and ephemeral (initiatives are born and die without ever being consolidated), as revealed in the conclusions presented by the Spanish delegation that attended the conference on media and intercultural dialogue in Europe in June 2007, organised by the Panos Institute and sponsored by the Council of Europe. According to their

report, multiculturalism in Spain is still seen more as a negative rather than positive phenomenon marked by strong prejudices, especially towards the Arab community.

The study also reports that there is no specific law in Spain regulating the independent media of minorities. The cost and infrastructures required to develop media platforms explains the absence of television or radio stations run specifically by immigrant communities.

Still, some interesting press initiatives are in distribution such as the monthly magazines *Pueblo Nuevo* and *Toumai*, aimed at the immigrant community in general, and the *Sí Se Puede* or *Raíz*, a monthly publication that has 10 segmented headers including *Raíz Marroquí* and *Raíz Africana*.

Media dedicated specifically to the Arab and Muslim communities are even rarer: the bimonthly *Attawasul*, created by the *Ibn Baton* socio-cultural association with a circulation of around 5,000 copies, and *Arab fi Isbania*, a fortnightly publication written in classical Arabic and French providing practical information to Arab immigrants and which distributes its circulation of 60,000 in mosques, specialized shops or phone centres, according to estimates published by the media Observatory *Minority*, a communications agency specialising in minorities.

The profile of the Maghreb community in Spain is 70% males and 30% women. Readership levels are low because some

cannot read Arabic and do not see Castilian as a reading language. The most popular newspaper among immigrants of Maghreb origin in Spain is *Marca*, "because they are fans of the Spanish soccer league", explains José Santamaría of *Minority*.

Most Muslims in Spain tend to look for information on Arab satellite television channels. This is particularly true in the case of the Maghreb community, whose members remain in contact with their countries of origin and also with "the whole transnational community" via satellite channels (ref. *Panos/Minority*).

There have also been some noteworthy initiatives on the Internet such as the information portals *Amanecer del Nuevo Siglo* (Dawn Magazine), which has editions in Spanish, English and Arabic, *Red Mundo Árabe*, which also incorporates rebroadcasts from Al Jazeera in English and the BBC in Arabic, or *Webislam*. However, different studies (*Minority/Panos*) indicate that although these webpages are read by the elite, it is more difficult for them to reach the Muslim man-in-the-street. Moreover, they are not aimed specifically at Muslims but try to provide alternative information on the Arab and Muslim world to all Spaniards interested in these topics.

Notwithstanding current activity, it is worth considering the extent to which minorities should be expected to develop their own media and whether this would help the social integration of Muslims in Spain.

### For more information, see:

Edward Said. **Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World.**

New York: Vintage Books, 1997.

Webislam  
[www.webislam.com](http://www.webislam.com)

*Amanecer del Nuevo Siglo*  
[www.revistaamanecer.com](http://www.revistaamanecer.com)

Red Mundo Árabe  
[www.mundoarabe.org](http://www.mundoarabe.org)



# 7

## Spanish Islam in Ceuta and Melilla



The cities of Ceuta and Melilla deserve special attention because their geographical locations and histories are unique and different to the situation of Islam in Spain. This specificity is determined by several factors that make Islam more visible, to the extent that it is claimed to be an integral part of the cultural identity of both cities. Nonetheless, there is an important difference between the social demands of Muslim associations and the interpretation offered by authorities and local historians, who strive to promote in both cities an image of harmonious coexistence among “four cultures”, basically the Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Hindu communities and religions. The cosmopolitan dream evoking the image of four co-existing cultures often clashes with a complex social reality not free of conflict, where the Jewish and Hindu communities are clear minorities. The Hindu community is barely visible in public life, so much so that the group is omitted as distinctions are made between a Jewish-Christian majority and a Muslim minority. This omission is one way tensions are revealed that distort the image of four cultures living in harmony.

This tension has much to do with the history of both cities and their location on the border with Morocco, which determines their strategic importance in bilateral relationships and the potential influence of Morocco, as well as claims to sovereignty over both cities. In both cities, Muslims have also claimed a series of rights – mainly nationality, education and bilingualism, control over religious worship and participation in public life – linked to the very special characteristics of both cities. Nevertheless, broadly speaking all similarities end there because despite sharing similar circumstances, Ceuta and Melilla each have their own complex and colourful pasts.

Both cities have been linked to Spain as strongholds since the 15th century and

their importance is evident in the commercial maritime and geostrategic context of the Mediterranean. As a result, their populations are formed by people from all parts of the Peninsula and, due to the geographical proximity of Morocco, a constant flow of workers from Morocco working mainly in the tertiary sector.

The first Islamic associations were promoted in 1937 by the Spanish military leaders and conceived as instruments for control in worship and somehow institutionalising the Muslim community, which also extended to the Spanish Protectorate in northern Morocco. The Mulay El Mehdi Mosque in Ceuta dates from that period. It was built as a sign of gratitude for the services rendered during the war by groups belonging to the *Fuerzas Regulares* (Moroccan soldiers who fought for the Spanish Army in Spanish Morocco) as seen in a plaque dedicated by Franco to commemorate the event.

“Muslim” associationism in Ceuta and Melilla actually dates back to the sixties when Muslim demands became truly visible to the public developing at the same time but differently in each city. In Melilla, Muslim mobilisation was more important and better structured, mainly because Muslims had better opportunities in Melilla to structure their participation in public life more efficiently.

The 1967 Law on Religious Freedom timidly offered Muslims the possibility to form associations, Melilla being the first city to register a Muslim association (the Muslim Association of Melilla) one year later. In Ceuta, the first association was *Zauia Musulmana Mohamadia-Mohammed*, created in 1971. Both are still active today and have always been pre-eminently religious associations.

It was not until the eighties that Muslim associations really began to develop and

make “Moorish” and Muslim aspirations more visible. The associations that appeared during this period were mainly socio-cultural entities rather than organisations that promoted the recognition of religious identity. Their main demands were civic rights, starting with nationality, following the introduction of the 1985 Law on Immigration. This law envisaged preferential conditions for obtaining Spanish nationality and residence or work permits for collectives recognised by law as being “culturally related” due to their historical and cultural links with Spain. However, Muslims in Ceuta and Melilla were not included as a historically related group in spite of their shared history and the fact that more than 75% of the Muslim population were natives of these cities, although only a very small percentage were Spanish nationals. The long dispute that drove Muslims in both cities to protest against this discrimination eventually forced the Administration to extend the concession of Spanish nationality to many Muslims in Ceuta and Melilla.

In the nineties, however, Muslim associations took a new direction. Up to this point they had concentrated mainly on fighting for civic rights and socio-cultural freedoms, mainly the right to speak the Berber dialect *Tamazight* in Melilla and cultural diversity in both cities. This new direction was promoted by the Cooperation Agreements signed between the Spanish Government and the Islamic Community of Spain in 1992, which, as in the rest of Spain, gave new visibility to the Muslim communities in both cities through the organisation of important events such as the celebration of Muslim religious festivities, the teaching of religion in public schools and the regulation of Imams and Muslim mosques and cemeteries.

As mentioned previously, it is common in both cities to refer to the exemplary coexistence of four cultures: Christians,

Jews, Muslims and Hindus. However, this official discourse is questioned by Muslim representatives in both cities who often draw attention to the social exclusion of the Muslim community. In response, during the mid eighties Muslims began creating their own political parties: in Melilla, the Coalition for Melilla Party (CpM); and in Ceuta, the Democratic Union of Ceuta Party (UDCE) and, with a smaller representation, the *Federación Ceutí* and the Democratic and Social Party of Ceuta Party (PDSC). These purely local parties are represented by leaders from the Muslim community and their results during elections show they obtain most of their votes in Muslim neighbourhoods. However, their political programmes do not include religious demands but rather focus on condemning the segregation of Muslims and demanding their right to space in the public arena. In fact, their representatives regret the scarce interaction among the different faiths, specifically their perceived exclusion of Muslims from public life.

The presence of two Muslim women (highly visible due to their use of veils) was very significant and had great repercussions both locally and nationally. In 2004, Salima Abdessalam was appointed CpM representative for Melilla and three years later Fátima Hamed Hossain became a representative of the UDCE in Ceuta. The impact of their appointments largely reflects recent changes as well as a desire to overcome inequalities between different communities, revealed by the greater vulnerability of Muslims in the labour market and in education.

Which factors are responsible for the exclusion of the Muslim population? Education is often highlighted as the main factor. School dropout rates among Muslims are high and unemployment and poverty are also worse in neighbourhoods

with larger concentrations of Muslims. According to statistics published by the Spanish Ministry of Education on the evolution of school dropout rates in Spain between 2000 and 2005, the national average in 2005 was 29.6%, but 49.9% and 42.4% in Ceuta and Melilla, respectively. There is no detailed breakdown according to religion or the influence of language used in the home on school dropout rates.

In the case of Melilla evidence linking cultural identity to school failure. In 2000, a study carried out under the Territorial Employment Pact relating education with residence in specific urban neighbourhoods showed that the districts in which people had lower levels of education were mainly neighbourhoods with larger Tamazight-speaking communities in Melilla.

In terms of poverty, the Survey of Living Conditions published by the INE (Spanish National Statistics Institute) shows that 19.9% of people in Spain lived below the poverty threshold in 2006, but this percentage was as high as 31.7% in Ceuta and Melilla. Although there is no detailed breakdown of statistics according to cultural or religious identity, it is clear that the neighbourhoods with the largest Muslim populations are also the poorest.

In addition to the problem of school failure, there are demands for Islam to be taught in schools as envisaged in the Cooperation Agreement of 1992. This requirement, established in the aforementioned Agreement, was implemented in 2005. At the same time, the teaching of Arabic and Berber began in Ceuta and Melilla schools, respectively, as an integration method and to curb school failure, since migratory pressure from Morocco tends to marginalise Muslim students and increases school dropout rates among this segment of the population. Since 2007, the inclusion of Islam as a subject in schools has enabled the use of Arabic in religious teaching, in accordance with the guidelines established by the Directorate General of Education. This educational demand is encompassed within a broader and more complex context that relates to the acceptance of official languages other than that marking the Spanishness of Ceuta and Melilla.

Religious education is one of the main activities promoted in recent years by Muslim associations. Religion is taught mainly in special classrooms in mosques and aims to offer students an introduction to Arabic, the Koran and the rudiments of Koranic exegesis. This initial immersion in classical Arabic, although very basic, allows and encourages young people to access religious programmes on Arab

satellite television channels more easily than if they only spoke the Moroccan dialect of Arabic or Tamazight used at home. Teachers in these private schools normally give classes outside school hours and are mainly Moroccan graduates from one of the faculties of Islamic Sciences in Morocco, mainly from Tangiers due to its proximity.

This religious education is accompanied by the impact of new technologies –especially the influence of satellite television– in the dissemination of modern Islamic knowledge that is different to traditional local Islamic practice. No data or studies are available on the impact or influence of these technologies, according to different factors such as social roots, age, education and socio-economic status of Muslims in both cities, which would allow us to determine in more detail how and where (identity, ideology, mobilisation and associationism) these new means of acquiring knowledge about Islam may be influential. Nevertheless, there is greater awareness of Muslim identity, resulting in a substantial increase in the number of private Muslim schools and new practices aimed at making Muslims more visible. These include Muslim women wearing modern hijab rather than traditional clothing, especially among young Muslim women, or larger attendance at Friday prayer in mosques by men and also women, something that was very uncommon in traditional Islamic worship. Although many people have warned that these visible signs reveal a radicalisation of Muslim communities, the communities themselves interpret them as symptoms of an awareness of religious identity and greater access to knowledge of Islam due to higher literacy and more resources for self-training using modern technologies.

Furthermore, the interpretation of this new Muslim visibility should not be prejudiced or seen solely as a “radicalisation”

of the Muslim population in terms of exclusion or belonging, or as a possible negative influence by Morocco due to the geostrategic importance of both cities, but rather as a phenomenon that occurs –as in other countries– when most of the population has access to specific forums of public communication in which Islam is the reference articulating and inspiring debates. Just as reformist currents of Islam throughout Europe are strongly influencing the redefinition of Muslim identity and its place in public life, the ripples of these influences reach part of the Muslim population in Ceuta and Melilla. They are not in opposition to the sentiment of belonging to Spain but quite the opposite. The first visit to Ceuta and Melilla by the King and Queen of Spain in 2007 revealed a clear desire on the part of most Muslim citizens in Ceuta and Melilla to demand and openly encourage the presence of the highest representatives of the Spanish State in their cities.

As regards the organisation and administration of mosques, Morocco's influence is often used as an argument to demonstrate a possible negative influence on the loyalty of Muslims in Ceuta and Melilla to Spain. In reality, daily practice in Muslim religious centres shows the content of sermons is mainly regulated and controlled by local mosque committees, although this is not an established norm but rather the result of everyday dynamics, influenced by many different circumstances ranging from the charisma and leadership capacity of the Imam or the members of the mosque management committee to their location in the city, financing or the socio-cultural activities they organise and their relations with municipal political authorities and associations. The most controversial issue related to this link with Morocco is possibly the financing of mosques, together with the origin of Imams: firstly, because

**Evolution of school dropout rates in Spain (2000-2005)**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Difference 2004-2005	Difference 2000-2005
<b>Spain</b>	26.6	26.6	28.9	28.7	28.5	29.6	1.1	3
<b>Melilla</b>	4.7	45.1	43.4	49.4	47.2	42.4	-4.8	-5.3
<b>Ceuta</b>	47.5	47	47.3	53.4	42.6	49.9	7.3	2.4

Source: Spanish Ministry of Education and Science. Series by Autonomous Communities

the Moroccan Ministry of Religious Affairs can finance the electricity and water expenses of mosques; and secondly, because Moroccan Imams who have obtained their titles in Morocco are often asked to give Friday prayer and sometimes even give children language and religion classes. In any event, the ideological role of mosques is influenced by local management; hence, the aforementioned Moroccan influence on Muslims in both cities is debatable and often questioned by autochthonous Muslims them-

selves, to the extent pro-Moroccan sentiment, which also exists, is only expressed by a very small minority.

Successfully tackling the future challenges for Islam in Ceuta and Melilla depends on prioritising social policies for the Muslim community in order to deal with matters such as education, unemployment and social alienation, but also on visibly recognising their cultural and religious identity as part of the inherited identity of both cities and therefore of Spain.

#### Para saber más:

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# Rethinking the historical legacy of muslim Spain.

By Eduardo Manzano Moreno



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**Think of a typical classroom in a school in Spain. The lesson is History and the teacher has to teach the pupils about the Middle Ages. Four or five decades ago, generations of teachers repeated the same obvious story to their pupils: in 711 the Arabs conquered *Hispania* and seized control of much of the territory; in rural areas in the north, however, a handful of heroic resistance fighters stood up to the invaders and after a crushing victory in the Battle of Covadonga, began a long process deemed the *Reconquista* or Reconquest that took eight centuries before the invaders were eventually expelled. Names such as Pelayo, Fernán González, El Cid, Guzmán el Bueno or the Catholic Monarchs were the protagonists of this famous episode in history, the common themes being the struggle against the Muslim enemy and the creation of the Spanish nation in the name of Catholicism, the ultimate objective of their victory.**

This narration of the past sought to strengthen national awareness and create patriots who identified with a common flag and legacy. This is why so much emphasis was placed on the idea that those medieval ancestors embodied the same values and ideas as the ones promoted by the Franco regime. In some Francoist history text books this perception went to the extreme of including horrific epilogues to thematic chapters inviting pupils to act out small theatrical representations in which they became the reconquering monarchs, warriors or monks, offering passionate dialogues exalting national values: thus, children momentarily became Pelayo, Rodrigo or Guzmán, the protagonists of the centuries-old Reconquest, which directly preceded other more recent crusades that also sought to reaffirm the national spirit.

The strong nationalist component that dominated the social projection of History

did not diminish with the arrival of democracy in classrooms, nor did it alter the fundamental aspects of this account of history. Although the new political and social circumstances reflected a certain softening of this nationalist view of Islamic Spain, it was still seen as a strange and distant time considered merely anecdotal or, at most, superficially informative. In fact, the proliferation of multiple nationalisms strengthened the idea of the past as a reflection of existing values and identities, making the search for historically significant events that reify current political legitimacies a priority. Thus, to highlight the origins of certain nationalities, regional regimes or differentiating features prompted attempts to look back to the past –and, therefore, in the collective memory– to identify specific characteristics in which each group would feel connected and their members comfortably situated within the historical narrative. Textbooks echoed those needs and once again the idea of the past as a mirror of the present was legitimised. This was also emphasized by the narrowing of reference frameworks due to new trends in education that centered on the need to root transmitted knowledge in students' immediate environments.

It is therefore fair to say that during the first five years of the recent stage of democracy, we have concentrated on ourselves when referring to our own history. We have strived too hard to reconstruct our own identities rewriting our own history to reflect our own vision of the past. The problem arises when “we” are not the only ones in our societies or in our classrooms because in both contexts we have been joined by people with many different geographical origins and cultural references radically different to those of collectives that were, until recently, the clear majorities. Alvaro, Jordi or Gorka are no longer the only names of students in schools or colleges. These students are

now joined by other pupils with names like Muhammad or Hassan with the same civil “status” but with attitudes that, at least in principle, are presumably more resistant to the insoluble historical problems associated with the appearance of certain peoples in the Peninsula, the origin of certain demands for self-government or the greater or lesser territorial dispersion of different nationalities.

The social and culturally homogeneous context defended and promoted by nationalist movements –whether central or peripheral– has therefore remained largely truncated. The consequences of this breakdown are deeper than generally acknowledged. A curious and true anecdote described by a prestigious historian, used for many years in UNESCO, illustrates the problems facing the guardians of historical essences.<sup>1</sup> The anecdote tells the tale of a spirited schoolteacher who worked in a suburb of a French city and who one day went to UNESCO's Paris headquarters to ask the organisation to force the French government to include the teaching of the history of al-Andalus or Muslim Spain in the national curriculum. The reason given by the teacher was very simple: most of his students were the children or grandchildren of Maghreb immigrants with little attachment to the major events of French national history and names like Charlemagne, Richelieu or Napoleon meant very little to them because their cultural references had nothing to do with the landmark events of French national history. In order to foster a sense of belonging in these students, something in the past they could hold onto, a historical pride, what better, in the spirited professor's opinion, than to recapture what has so often been referred to as the “legacy of Spanish-Arab civilization”; a glo-

rious and crucially influential artistic and cultural legacy (how often has that been said!) in the development of European culture, and dominated by one culture, Arabic culture, which enjoyed its period of greatest splendour during the medieval centuries prior to the aggressions suffered during reconquests, crusades, imperialism and colonialism.

This teacher's intention may have been to show that by teaching students their own past –not a past “offered to them” by French national discourse– they could become more conscious, responsible and active members of their community. However, the teacher forgot that UNESCO is not authorised to impose study programmes in its member countries, which meant that it politely declined to support his ambitious project of including the study of al-Andalus in the official curriculum of French secondary education. The teacher responded unyieldingly by going on a hunger strike, which received press coverage, and only ended when the French Ministry of Education decided to offer the teacher and his students a study scholarship to travel to Spain, including visits to Cordoba, Seville and Granada.

This spirited teacher's aim may seem naïve and, at the same time, slightly absurd. Nothing could be further from the truth: he simply applied the same method of mirroring history that we find normal and even reasonable when we use them to reflect our own histories, but which we find incredible or ridiculous when used to represent others. An endless number of historical disputes carried out in the shadow of nationalist thought regarding historical origins, identities or rights have used arguments based on the notion that the past contains the memories and facts of

<sup>1</sup> M.R. de Madariaga, “En torno a al-Andalus: extrapolaciones históricas y utilizaciones abusivas” in G. Fernández Parrilla and M.C. Feria García. Eds. *Orientalismo, exotismo y traducción*, Toldeo, 2000, pages . 83-84.



our ancestors. Why is it strange that others look for other ancestors to identify with? Why should certain genealogical lines be more valid than others? After observing that his pupils failed to embrace old French national history, this teacher looked for a reasonable replacement, something they would see as their “own history”, i.e. the history of Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula: the search for historical identity was transferred slightly to a different geographical context, but the essence of this rationale remained intact.

It is legitimate to consider what will happen in our country when the same problem arises. We must examine our historical figures, our references in the past, our tales, old and new, of the events that have made us who we are, and compare everything with the possible vision of the Islamic past of the Peninsula in the family or social contexts of Muhammad or Hassan, sitting next to a boy called Alvarito. Much has been said in Spain in recent years about the “true” history of Spain, but few have reflected on how we can transmit this history in today’s new social context. The myths of the “Reconquest” that have remained intact through successive generations – and which, it must be emphasized, do not make them “historically authentic” – are supposed to be politically useful in a relatively homogeneous social context, but reveal all their inconsistencies before an on-looking society with insurmountable cultural differences.

One scenario in the not-too-distant future may be a division of secondary education classes where students are sorted based on identity. On the one hand –remember the new names of some students– pupils who identify with the legacy and heroic tales of “Christian Spain”, an inescapable legacy that has dominated the teaching of history in classrooms; and on the other, students who seek their own place to vin-

dicate the splendid past that has fuelled the myth of al-Andalus. The mirrors would work here immediately, without having to change study programmes or emphasize any doctrinal aspects because the historical reality of the Islamic past of the Iberian Peninsula is tangible and indisputable. One does not need a boundless imagination to know who would proclaim themselves the heirs of the al-Andalus legacy and the degree of controversy such claims would arouse. This would result in a dissociated historical memory, where the choice would be between El Cid and Almanzor, consigned to mosques and cathedrals, and basically lacking any idea of common citizenship.

What is unusual about this is that when faced with such an urgent challenge, no answers are available, only potential problems. One has been a tendency to emphasize the largely negative aspects of the period of Islamic occupation in the Iberian Peninsula, portrayed as a parenthesis brought to a fortunate end by the Reconquest. This idea is, of course, not new and has been repeated incessantly by the most conservative nationalists over the last two centuries, although many of us during the nineteen eighties and part of the nineties mistakenly believed it was in decline. Such ideas are enjoying a strong resurgence fuelled by fears aroused by “Al-Qaeda terrorism”, the phenomena of immigration or episodes of cultural confrontations described so often in the media.

This topic has been a goldmine for journalists, publicists and experts, who have written many books, essays and editorials on this subject. In this case, looking to the past to find parallels with the present is also a strong temptation, often too strong to resist. If Al-Qaeda’s leaders insist, for example, on presenting the current war in Iraq as a repeat of the medieval Crusades, there would be nothing more

logical than to dust off the old ideological arsenal to accept the challenge and consider the confrontation in the same terms. Using the simplifying concept of the “clash of civilizations”, these neo-Medieval ideologists repeat fairly consistently the same arguments that whole generations of polemicists have used against Islam, stating that time has proven their arguments to be correct. Their “fundamentalist” vision finds perfect support in the immanence of concepts and ideas used by other “fundamentalists” they so revile, the result being that in the hands of the former or the latter, History is only useful for confirming the inevitability of a confrontation that has been going on since the Arabs embarked on their great military expansion after the death of the Prophet.

Such a broad reading of events would be nothing more than another of the many embarrassing intellectual ravings at the beginning of this century if it were not for the terrifying consequences it has and may possibly continue to have in the future. This is easy to confirm by simply remembering how this vision has been influenced by the words and decisions of certain politicians obsessed with tracing a thread of continuity between the medieval past and the global present. In this discourse, the key idea is that fourteen centuries later we are still in the same situation: aggression remains and must be rejected as strongly and using the same means as those employed by “our ancestors” in order to maintain an identity that is once again under threat. Words –and, what is worse, decisions– simply project –and, what is worse, apply– a line of thought that has developed from an ideological perspective and that has revived the spectre of antagonism against Islam.

Adopting a militant attitude to a militant threat naturally has huge repercussions. It is not difficult to convince broad sectors of society that the historical mirror reflects

apparently similar images, exact replicas in time of the current reality. This is, however, self-interested deception: the images are always much more blurred than initially intended and the equivalences are also unclear or inaccurate. Take, for example, the age-old theme of the Holy War, the *Jihad* that Islamist propaganda uses continually to bombard not only followers but non-followers as well. As explained previously, the reason for using the term “speculate” is to emphasize that this is a concept consubstantial to Islam, a palpable demonstration of its hopelessly violent nature reluctant to reach any compromise. Arab military expansion, the inflamed descriptions of medieval looting expeditions –who has not heard of Almanzor?– or, in short, the modern fight against the Turks –who has not heard of Lepanto?– show that all these events are connected in a thread of historical continuity linked to the tragic events of today.

However, this evidence is inconsistent and should be critically examined in the same way as Islamist allegations that insist on establishing continuity between the medieval crusades and the terrible wars being fought today. Of course, nobody denies that there are certain sectors of the ideological media in the Muslim world that compare the medieval Holy War with the fighting that rages today, in the same way as – as we have seen – some continue to believe that this represents a type of reconquest or thousand-year-old crusade. However, you cannot fight wrong with wrong. A modicum of historical sense shows that the militant and expansive Islam has been legitimised in certain periods and responds according to specific circumstances in specific areas and territories. The expansion of the Almohads in the Maghreb during the 12th century was not the same as Turkish imperialism during early modern times, independently of the fact that both were carried out in the name of Islam, which was interpreted

very differently in each case. However, in other periods, that type of militant Islam (considered by some to be eternal) simply did not exist. For example, Europeans in the 19th century and first half of the 20th century would have been hugely surprised at our current vision of the Muslim world, accustomed to the ideas of "oriental fatalism" and the indolence and lack of fighting spirit of their people: a quick look at the tales of journeys to, or descriptions of, the Near East or Northern Africa before the middle of last century confirm the perception, marked by certain contempt, western intellectual elites had of Islamic societies.

In spite of everything, the greatest fallacy of this essentialist line of thought, which places so much emphasis on 1,300 years of continuous fighting, is that it ignores, and tries to make us ignore, that the current situation is the direct result of events that have taken place in the last few decades. It is easy and convenient to attribute responsibility for current problems to a fundamentally violent and aggressive Islam instead of examining the political decisions, uncompromising geostrategies or economic interests that are responsible for the current situation. Reviving the ghost of Almanzor only conceals the obvious fact that origins of the current situations in the Near East and North Africa can be charted to the period after World War II, and where the political discourses have made violence the cornerstone of their arguments.

However, these are by no means the only considerations that can be drawn on the Holy War. Others include the fact that not all Muslim exegetes agree that the concept of *Jihad* cannot be associated with war, some preferring to see this as an obligation to become a better Muslim. Many currents of thought have also defined this as an obligation of all Muslims to try to achieve a better system of govern-

ment, based on a well known tradition of the Prophet that claims that "the greatest jihad is to speak the word of truth to a tyrant." Thus, after abandoning bias against *Jihad*, its meaning and the meaning of Islam become more complex and, paradoxically, more comprehensible.

It would be a mistake, however, to consider that the historical legacy of al-Andalus has only been distorted by nationalist conservatism. Other agendas exist, of course, possibly more compatible in their objectives but equally insistent on relating current situations with reflections of the past. In this case, images portray the "splendour of Moorish culture in Andalusia", the "accidental miscegenation" behind its creation and in particular the "coexistence" that medieval society was able to forge among Muslims, Jews and Christians. This idyllic vision paints a largely utopian picture of a society in which Muslims displayed unusual tolerance and respect towards the other monotheistic religions, with Muslim literature and art blossomed during the Middle Ages. This *convivencia*, or coexistence, may reveal useful values for tackling today's challenges and thus avoiding the spectres of "intolerance" and "fanaticism" from taking root in our societies.

Far from being progressist or building new bridges for understanding, this vision simply appropriates historical clichés that either lack foundation or are based on biased or incomplete evidence to glorify the period of al-Andalus. These overtones simply reify a historical myth or, in other words, an effective means of indoctrination, propaganda or exaltation. It is therefore not surprising that this myth has become a cornerstone of official discourses used by all those politicians, academics or artists who mainly seek to please Arab audiences or Muslims in general. Pleasing or flattering them with continual references to the wonders of the al-Andalus civili-

sation and making poetic concessions to a so-called lost paradise guarantees success among audiences they want to make their accomplices by offering a hyperbolic evaluation of the aspects of a past that we, rhetorically speaking, present to them as *their own past*.

Of course, this historical mirror has as many cracks as the mirrors described earlier. When trying to see the present in the past, the results are never unanimous because this always depends on the pages of history we read: the even pages may conveniently describe tales of splendour and tolerance, while the odd pages may describe violence and exclusion. The history of al-Andalus was neither a period of continual peaceful coexistence and splendour nor were miscegenation and inter-culturality any more than anecdotal and superficial aspects that had no effect whatsoever on the essence of a society with a clear and strong Arab and Islamic identity. Undeniably, there were periods of great cultural splendour or strong expansion and development, but like many other past and present societies, also experienced great abuses, exploitations and episodes of violence wielded in the name of domination or segregation.

Perhaps the most negative aspect of the idealised image of al-Andalus is that, in spite of its good intention, it helps to articulate certain discourses that would be sinister in other contexts. In this context, however, these narratives seem to be accepted with a naturalness that does not correspond to the controversial nature of its content. Flattering specific audiences requires consensus. As participants in this dance, we are merely acting as artifices of rhetoric. However, the problem arises when idealisations and mystifications are taken as truth by groups that go so far as to claim the heritage of al-Andalus as their own and even in a militant way. Maintaining that idea simply fuels argu-

ments of purest nationalism or fundamentalism with disastrous consequences.

For those of us who have suffered through the mechanisms of historical indoctrination, certain declarations and positions adopted in the name of the al-Andalus legacy are disconcerting. Remember, for example, the glorification of the Spanish empire, the romantic version of imperialicism in the works of period poets and musicians and the incredulous claims made to connect a past empire to the present. This should make us wary of the potential consequences of gratuitous exaltations of the past, even if that past is as lyrically intimate and poetically evocative as the Moorish past. When such gratuitous exaltations are also supported by others, happily willing to sanction this past using their own devices, they not only exalt the myth but also the technique of its dissemination.

The use of distorting historical mirrors suggests that rethinking Spain's Muslim past is little more than an illusion. I do not believe this to be the case. Let us go back to the hypothetical History lesson in which children with different backgrounds and beliefs live and learn together, but with a common citizenship protected by a democratic and egalitarian state. The obligation of the school or college in question, and therefore of the History lesson, is to teach certain common principles that may consolidate equal rights and opportunities that must be guaranteed to citizens. In this system there is no room for a past that projects the ideals of either patriots or believers, nor a discourse based on the feats of our ancestors, simply because those ancestors were neither really ours –few, very few are fortunate or unfortunate to have any real memory of their ancestors– nor did they live or die with us in mind. In fact, the only things that History class should teach are the processes of change that took place at the time,

changes that would help us understand the huge gaps that open up over the centuries. Muza, Pelayo, Almanzor or El Cid could never have imagined what modern democratic societies would be like. Concepts such as human rights or equality would have been as incomprehensible to them as nuclear physics. Claiming they were precursors of either concept is nonsense simply because these ideals cannot even remotely be compared with values during their time.

Given the huge span of time that separates us from al-Andalus, we should be able to approach that period of history as we should with any other historical period, with an impartial and objective eye. While this may be difficult, it would allow us as citizens to better understand historical knowledge of our past and the past of others. Can one be fully integrated in our society without knowing all the historical references that configure that society, regardless of the origin of those references? Is it incompatible to have a specific belief in order to understand the importance of the historical, artistic or literary milestones that have shaped the historical legacy we must pass onto new generations? I believe the answer to both questions is no, the conclusion being that we must finally overcome conceptions of history based on the affirmation of identities or beliefs. Although it may seem more diffuse or utopian, but no less possible, perhaps now is the time to starting building our historical conceptions on something as aseptic, but also enriching and socially articulating, as pure and simple knowledge.

# Opinions and testimonies

We now present the opinions and testimonies of a varied group of Muslims, only partially representative of a much more plural and diverse community that cannot be covered fully in this reference guide. All the participants agreed to share their views on a variety of questions regarding the topics addressed in the preceding chapters. The intention of presenting their testimonies was never to present them as community representatives but rather to reflect the diversity of that heterogeneous group formed by Muslims in Spain. These include association leaders, public representatives, professionals ... women and men with different backgrounds, some –most in fact– are well-known for their professional achievements in Spanish public life, but there are other anonymous individuals who we asked to share their experiences and opinions on religious practice, education, community leadership and the representation and image of Islam in public opinion. All belong to Muslim associations and participate in different ways in Spanish civil society. The result is a varied mosaic of personal opinions that does away with the schematic and reductionist stereotypes associated with Muslims.

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## ■ Salima Abdessalam

Aged 32, an economist from Melilla. Salima is a member of the local Parliament, representing her party *Coalición por Melilla*. She is responsible for political and economic affairs. She belongs to several non-governmental associations and believes that “associations promoting solidarity in this community are essential because there are many needs and few responses apart from actions taken for purely electoral purposes.”



## ■ Samira Boutaleb

Aged 32, from Morocco. Samira moved to Granada for academic reasons and is about to finish her doctoral thesis in biotechnology, although she has decided to settle definitively with their husband, also a Moroccan, because their two children were born in Granada and they believe their future is in Spain. They developed their social activism in Granada and this is where Samira launched the Nur Women's Association, of which she is president and which she defines as “an association that aims to facilitate the positive integration of immigrant women in their socio-cultural and economic environment, since this is essential for families in our community.”



## ■ Mohammed Chaib Akhdim

Aged 45, born in Tangiers. Mohammed was brought up in Catalonia and Morocco. He is a member of the Catalan Parliament and a staunch defender of the right to vote for emigrants. Since 1994 he has been president of the Ibn Batuta Cultural Association, a secular entity that promotes the integration of immigrants (basically Maghreb citizens, but also Pakistanis, sub-Saharan, etc.). Chaib is also a promoter of the *Consell Cultural Islàmic de Catalunya*, which he describes as “a religious entity that brings Muslims in Catalonia together” and a “unique model in Spain combining secularism with religious aspects.”



## ■ Fatima Hamed Hossain

Aged 30, from Ceuta. Fatima is a lawyer. Since June 2007, she has been a member of the Assembly of the Autonomous City of Ceuta. She first became actively involved in associations as a member of the youth association *Jóvenes Demócratas*, a youth branch of the political group *Unión Democrática Ceutí*, of which she is a member and which promotes the fight against social inequalities in the city.



#### ■ Said Kirlani

Aged 34, originally from Meknes. Said is a training researcher at the Autonomous University of Madrid. He is president of the Association of Moroccan University Students of Madrid. He describes this association as “committed to developing cultural, educational and social activities that attempts, as established in its bylaws, to help Moroccan students in particular and the Moroccan community in general, in order to achieve better integration in Madrid society. It also carries out activities to promote Moroccan society, culture and a variety of current issues for the rest of society. The community has many needs in this respect and the Association tries to do as much as it can, in spite of the subjective and objective difficulties that arise, restricted working conditions, etc. The results are always insufficient and improvable, but the Association is happy with the work it is doing.”



#### ■ Yusuf Fernández

Aged 43 and born in Pola de Laviana in Asturias. Yusuf is a journalist and runs the most visited portal on Islam in Spanish: Webislam. He is also director of the maga-

zine *Amanecer del Nuevo Siglo*. He is a member of *Junta Islámica* and secretary of the Muslim Federation of Spain (FEME) since its creation in 2006.



#### ■ Kamal Mekhelef

Aged 42, born in Algeria and with Spanish nationality. Kamal came to Spain to study translation. After a time in Madrid, he settled in Cordoba where he works as a freelance jeweller. He is member of the Muslim Association of Cordoba, created in 1991, and has been since then the association's president. The Association's members have different origins: Spaniards converted to Islam, Moroccans, Algerians, Pakistanis, Senegalese, etc. The Association's relationship with Cordoba City Council is intense and fluid, which is important because all applications, awards, renewals of authorisations must be approved by the municipal authorities. The association also maintains intermittent contact with the Spanish Ministry of Justice.



#### ■ Yaratullah Monturiol

Aged 46, born in Barcelona. Yaratullah is a scholar of the Koran, exegete and researcher of holy texts. She writes and lectures on topics relating to Islam, women, spirituality and inter-religious dialogue. She also runs different associations, promotes projects and is the author of several books. She is the founder and former president of *Insha Allah* (1994-2001) and *Junta Islámica Catalana* (2005). She is a member of the Advisory Committee of the Parliament of World Religions-Forum of Cultures (2004). She is currently Vice-President of the UNESCO Association for the Inter-faith dialogue, secretary of the GIERFI International Group for Muslim Women.



#### ■ Amparo Sánchez

Aged 55, born in Valencia. Amparo is a sales delegate and restaurant owner. She is president of the Islamic Cultural Center of Valencia and plays a very active role in the An'Nur (Light of Islam) Association of Muslim Women and the Supreme Islamic Council of the Autonomous Community of Valencia. She is often asked by the media to comment on her experience as a Muslim woman.



#### ■ Samba Yero Diop

Aged 30 and born in M'Bagnec (Mauritania). Samba is currently working in a phone centre but was previously a street seller. Samba belongs to the Muslim Association of Cordoba, but he has never considered presenting his candidacy for a post of responsibility in the association, mainly due to lack of time. He attends assembly meetings and pays his monthly contribution for the maintenance of the Morabout mosque (*El Morabito*). Samba considers that, within its possibilities, the Muslim Association of Cordoba caters to the needs of the Muslim community because it offers Muslims in the city a small mosque, which they can use to meet, celebrate special occasions and events and practice their religion. They recently found an Egyptian imam for the mosque and they also provide Arabic classes for children and organize trips to the countryside. For Samba, the association is small but at least it is organized. Nevertheless, he believes that the Muslim community, which has grown substantially in the last ten years, needs larger premises and a bigger mosque.

## Participation

Are Muslims well represented before State institutions? What aspects of the 1992 Cooperation Agreement can be improved? Despite having different opinions and arguments, all the interviewees agreed that the CIE is not an efficient representative body. According to Salima Abdessalam, “until there is real democracy in the Muslim Community in Spain, it will not be represented fairly and according to its needs.” The member of the Catalan Parliament Mohamed Chaib highlights the problem of resistance to change because “the State continues to work with the same structures as when there were 20,000 Muslims. Today there are more than one million in Spain ... It’s clear that the current model of management of Islam in Spain doesn’t work.” Yusuf Fernández also describes this representative framework as “obsolete” because it does not envisage the participation of new federations.

In that sense, Said Kirlani considers that more democratic direct elections are required. He believes that “Muslims’ rights and obligations, as established in the 1992 Agreement, are generally well defined. However, reading these agreements and basic knowledge of the real situation of the Muslim community in relation to the aspects envisaged in the agreement shows that what is written is completely different to the reality.”

Amparo Sánchez shares this point of view and considers it is difficult to evaluate the Agreements because “they have never been implemented in practice.” Yaratullah Monturiol agrees and reflects in detail on the process: “Since these agreements were signed, the Government has never shown any real intention to fully apply the agreements, even though their unprecedented creation would have been a good reference, even for other countries. So far, a great opportunity has been lost to organise the Islamic community in Spain and normalise their increasingly complicated situation. The creation of two federations, in clear conditions of inequality and with difficulties in achieving communication and consensus from the outset, has always hindered the decisions and initiatives they had to agree on, thus justifying their inability not only to implement the agreements but also to carry out many other projects. The Islamic Commission of Spain should have supported entities that made the effort to join one of the two federations, but so far the administration and results have been, at the best, disappointing.”

Kamal Mekhellef believes that the Agreements have to be revised, but first associations have to be reorganized in order to achieve a higher level of representation: a filtering process is required and the associations that provide no real service or are not representative could be eliminated. Then federations could be created in each autonomous community, for example.

According to Samba Yero Diop, part of the failure is also due to the shortcomings of the Muslim associations themselves. He believes the Muslim community is not well represented before State institutions and the main problem is great ignorance of Islam, not only in his city and in Spain but in all western countries in general. He also attributes this problem to the inadequate representativeness of federations of Muslim associations that act as intermediaries with the State. Samba believes that both the State and these organizations should make efforts to obtain better mutual knowledge, but highlights that Muslims themselves are not informed about the work and achievements of these associations. He does not only blame the organisations but also a lack of interest on the part of Muslims who, after coming to Spain to work, devote themselves exclusively to their jobs.

## Islam in Europe or “European Islam”?

Islam in Europe and the nature of a “European Islam” is another point of reflection that contains many different traits and even divergences in terms of its definition. Although most interviewees had knowledge of, and in some cases personal contact with, organisations at European level, the associations to which they belong have no organic links with these organisations, and only Yaratullah Monturiol belongs to an organisation of this type: the European Muslim Network.

Amparo Sánchez believes that “European Islam is developing. Although this term annoys some Muslims because there is only one Islam, and this is largely true, it is also true that the way of living and practicing Islam is not the same in all the countries and in Europe adaptation is essential.” Fatima Hamed goes further and believes that “there is not only one European Islam because in Europe we can identify and make a distinction between Spanish, French, British, Dutch and other Muslims, who are not only influenced by the societies in which they are educated but also by their parents’ origins”. However, her commitment as a Muslim does not necessarily mean that she identifies with Muslim associations or European networks. “Contacts and links must be maintained with persons who are ready to make a better world, regardless of their religious identity”, says Fatima.

Said Kirlani believes that, when referring to European Islam, a distinction must be made between religion and culture: “From a religious standpoint, I believe there is only one Islam and in this respect all Muslims try to follow its rules on the practice of faith, worship (prayers, fasting, alms, pilgrimages, etc.), personal and community relations, etc. At a cultural level, Muslims come from different geographical places and each place (country, region or area) has different cultural standards. The Maghreb is not the Mashreq, Arab countries are not Turkey, or Iran, or Pakistan, etc. Berbers or Kurds are not Arabs. So, there may be and in fact are many different cultural factors that influence religion according to the specific geographical location. Thus, there is no reason why culturally speaking there cannot be a European, and even Spanish or Andalusian Islam for example.”

Salima Abdessalam considers that there is a “Western Islam” which he describes as “purer insofar as it is not undermined by being mixed and confused with questions sometimes mistakenly linked to Islam. In the West, Muslims are free-thinkers and have a more universal and not a local attitude towards Islam.” According to Samba Yero Diop, however, “referring to a European Islam is a mistake because, as a religious faith, it is universal, although I must confess that, in practice, it should sometimes adapt.” He recognises that sometimes, due to different influences, Muslims may do things in Europe that they would not do in an Islamic country (e.g. to take off a veil, go to discothèques). He believes that being considered, for example, “a mainly non-practicing Muslim” is comparable to the European notion of a “non-practicing Christian” and that this could be understood as a “Europeisation” of Islam. He finds this behaviour negative because if you know that you are not a practicing Muslim and you do nothing to remedy this, you are making a mistake. Samba Yero Diop believes that Muslims either fulfil or do not fulfil their obligations. You cannot be a Muslim without practicing Islam, which does not mean that you are a “radical” (e.g. a boy who goes to school must go everyday; he cannot go some days and not others). It may be comprehensible that there is a “European Islam that is less Islamic because it allows you to take a more relaxed approach to fulfilling your religious obligations.”

Kamal Mekhellef says that there is an “Islam in the European context” that has a different focus: a Muslim living in a non-Islamic country faces different obstacles to those facing a Muslim living in an Islamic country. But it is incorrect to speak of a “European Islam.” The geographical extension of the Islamic world implies that there are different realities where Islam can be found, each with different idiosyncrasies. However, Islam has only one foundation. The problem of religious authority also exists in Islamic countries: since there are different schools of Islamic law, each Muslim may feel greater affinity for one school or another. Mekhellef considers that it would be ideal to have qualified people in Europe, living in the European context and close to the problems of European Muslims, who could become references for European Muslims. It is pointless for people living in such different places to interpret a reality they are not familiar with. In fact, an essential condition for issuing a *fatwa* is knowing the context in which it will be applied. According to Mekhellef, however, there are still not enough qualified Muslims in Europe.

## Education

**Education is another important aspect to consider, not only in terms of religion classes but also civic values and integration that schools can offer both Muslim and non-Muslim children.**

Yaratullah Monturiol is critical of the model in general and considers that radical and urgent reform is required. She believes that “the Spanish population in general must be made aware of the urgent need for education in religious culture; this must be an important subject properly taught by qualified teachers without proselytist tendencies, phobias or prejudices that disqualify any tradition, with objective methods and contributions from experts of different faiths, thus making these lessons interesting and rich in content. This would include secular tradition as an alternative, without favouring any belief over another (knowledge of each belief or faith and its historical or philosophical influence should never seek ideological manipulation or be presented as a “saviour”). Teaching religion or catechism in state schools is a way of discriminating against students and denying them knowledge and mutual respect; it fosters intolerance and the proliferation of prejudices and stereotypes.”

In general, all the interviewees highlighted the need to provide knowledge on cultural and religious diversity, albeit with different connotations. Said Kirlani points out that “some aspects have to be taken into consideration when referring to the history of Spain, particularly the period of al-Andalus. Muslim children identify strongly with this and their friends identify them with this historical period. Great care has to be taken when explaining this period of history. This is also the case with cultural trends in countries with Muslim majorities, when referring to religious matters, addressing social, cultural and educational issues of a religion like Islam.” However, he also believes that “in general the educational system should not condition the integration of any individual.”

Samira Boutaleb values the current education system in Spain as positive provided the commitments undertaken in the 1992 Agreements are fulfilled. “Institutions have to open

up to Islamic associations in order to make students aware of the cultural diversity of the society in which they are growing up.”

Kamal Mekhellef considers that it is harmful for children of immigrants to be treated as immigrants even if they were born in Spain. He also feels that one unresolved issue for Muslims in Spain is the revision of textbooks on Islam and Muslims because their contents still offer negative and unreal points of view. He is also in favour of secular schools not teaching religion. Religious faith should be developed privately and parents should be responsible for transmitting the values they consider appropriate. But the same rule should apply to everyone: if Catholics are entitled to receive religion classes at school, then Muslims should also have this right.

Fatima Hamed believes that “the religion of each individual should not matter, what is important is preparing future citizens.” She considers that societies are richer if they are more heterogeneous.

## Being a minority

**What is the life of Muslims in a “non-Muslim” environment like? None of the interviewees had any problem individually with following their religion. Yusuf Fernández believes stronger willpower is required and Amparo Sánchez sometimes finds it hard to follow the rules of her religion in a non-Muslim environment. Fatima Hamed feels that, as a Spanish Muslim, the difficulty is not observing rules but rather adapting to Spanish social customs, especially for immigrant Muslims. Said Kirlani also believes that following the rules of Islam is not that difficult because “Islam is very flexible in this respect.” According to Samira Boutaleb, “the problem is usually the behaviour of a segment of society that is still unable to coexist with different people without prejudices regarding their origin or beliefs.” In that sense, Mohammed Chaib and Amparo Sánchez consider that the visible use of the *hijab* is still a pending issue for Spanish society.**

However, Mohammed Chaib, Amparo Sánchez and Said Kirlani all mentioned public and institutional shortcomings in terms of facilities at mosques, cemeteries, *halal* food products, etc.; paradoxically, all these elements are recognised as rights in the 1992 Agreements.

According to Kamal Mekhellef, the institutions are interested in resolving the problems or, at least, listening to Muslims and hearing their concerns and needs. But he is concerned about the radical secular conception of society: “a secular State is an option like any other; but trying to impose laicism on citizens is another question all together. It is one thing for the State and schools to be secular but that does not mean that citizens must also be secular. A secular framework does not have to condition individual freedom. Why is wearing a miniskirt considered an expression of free personal choice while wearing a *hijab* is seen as a symptom of submissiveness? People are unable to understand the diversity of values that exists, have existed and will always exist. Those who defend freedom most strongly are the most paternalistic: Muslims should be allowed to defend themselves on their own.”

## Image of Islam in the Media and political discourse

Finally, since this is a publication on Muslims in Spain, we clearly wanted to obtain the interviewees' opinions regarding the image of Islam in the media and in Spanish public opinion. Chaib considers this to be an absurd combination of Islam and terrorism. According to Salima Abdessalam, the media helps build a stereotype that associates Islam with terrorism, injustice, chauvinism, the Middle Ages, intransigence and intolerance. Samira Boutaleb also believes that "Spanish public opinion is being bombarded with news stories that do not help to create a positive image of the Muslim community, a situation that is compounded by external events, particularly a very tense international context. It would be more constructive to inform people about the great challenge facing intellectuals in this country to create points for meeting and dialogue among the different religions."

However, Yusuf Fernández believes that differences exist between "a current that is sympathetic towards Islam and another dominant current that feels hostility and distrust."

Kirlani develops this amalgam further and highlights confusion between Islam and Muslims. He believes that "any attitude, action or behaviour on the part of Muslims is associated with Islam, and this has a strong effect on the image and perception of Islam. The media's power to influence public opinion is often decisive. In this sense, the Muslim community unanimously attributes much of the bad image of Islam and Muslims in Spain to sectors of the media with selfish interests in portraying this negative image. As written in state policies regarding Islam, these seem to be conditioned by a certain fear or distrust of this religion and its followers. I believe there should be more trust and greater efforts along these lines to resolve current and potential problems. Muslims do not want privileges but rights and better conditions in certain areas that differentiate them from most of society."

Kamal Mekhellef and Samba Yero Diop both claim that Muslims are partly to blame for this negative image because they do not know how to react to such attacks. According to Mekhellef, "they should condemn [such attacks], write to the media and give press conferences, but they do not." Yero Diop believes Muslims should find ways to increase their presence in the media, responding to and condemning aggressive acts. He believes that "just as the media come to us when they need to make reports, we should also go to the media to condemn or inform. Sometimes, we simply give up and do nothing because we think ignorance is to blame."

When asked about Spanish public opinion of Islam, Fatima Hamed answered with another question: "Am I not as Spanish as any other citizen?" She believes this question provides the key to understanding why "even second or third generation Muslims who know no other social reality except the Spanish one in which they have been brought up, are still identified as foreigners when they should not be because they pay the same taxes and the same mortgages as any other citizen."



# Glossary

## Da`wa

Invitation or call. In religious terms it refers to the preaching of Islam.

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## Fatwa

Religious opinion on Islamic law issued by an expert in laws or in Islamic law, who acts as *a mufti* (the person issuing the *fatwa*), based on the *sharia* and in Islamic case law related with the case on which the *fatwa* is issued.

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## Fiqh

Islamic jurisprudence interpreted by *ulemas* engaging in different schools of Islamic law.

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## Hadith

Short account of the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad. Together with the Koran, *hadith* collections are the fundamental references of Islam

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## Halal

This refers to anything that is permissible under Islam, from the type of food to ways of doing business. It is the opposite of *haram*, which refers to anything that is forbidden.

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## Hajj

One of the five pillars of Islam. The pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina and the rituals and obligations associated with this great pilgrimage that all Muslims should try to do.

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## Hijra

Refers to the emigration of Muhammad and his first followers

to Mecca and Medina in September 622 to escape persecution. This date marks the beginning of the Islamic era.

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## Eid al- Adha or Eid al-Kabir (Festival of Sacrifice or Great Festival)

This falls on the 10th day of the month of *Dhul Hijja*. To coincide with the pilgrimage, lambs are slaughtered to commemorate Ibrahim's (Abraham's) sacrifice of his son.

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## Eid al-Fitr or Eid al-Saghir (Feast of the Breaking of the Fast or Smaller Festival)

This festival celebrates the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting, on the first day of the tenth month of *Shawwal*.

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## Ijtihad

Personal effort to interpret Islamic sources, the Koran, the Tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, the consensus of the *ulemas* and the analogy. It is the opposite of the *taqlid*, the imitation or repetition of interpretations of past Islamic authorities.

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## Imam

In Sunni Islam, this is the person who leads the prayer during Islamic gatherings. The imam may be a believer with a good Islamic education, or a person recognised by others, or any good believer. It may also be applied as an honorary title. Thus, the founder of each school of Islamic law is given the title of *imam*, but other great *ulemas* have also received this

distinction. Therefore, in the early days of Islam the word imam was applied to the Caliph because he was responsible for leading the community of believers (*umma*). For Shi'a Muslims, the imam has a particular significance: he is the intercessor or mediator between God and the believer, and has religious and political authority. Shi'a Muslims believe that Ali was the first Imam, and he was followed by the descendents of Fatima, his wife and the Prophet's daughter.

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## Islam

Monotheistic religion that appeared between 610 and 632 and structured around five pillars that all good Muslims must follow: profession of faith (*Shahadah*), ritual prayer (*Salah*), alms giving (*Zakat*), fasting (*Sawm*) during the month of Ramadan and pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to the holy places of Mecca and Medina whenever possible. Beyond its purely religious aspects, Islam applies to a whole culture. The term "Islam" means "submission to God."

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## Islamic

Referring to Islam (Islamic thought, Islamic law, Islamic society, etc.)

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## Islamism

Neologism used to refer to contemporary groups and movements that use Islamic references to build their political thought. It is not a monolithic current but rather a term used to describe a contemporary phenomenon advocating very different forms of political thought legitimated through Islamic references.

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## Jihad

Deriving from the root *yhd*, meaning "struggle", the word *jihad* is polysemic and is used to refer to both individual

purification and the fight against temptations (the *greater jihad*) and the armed struggle against those who attack Islam (smaller *jihad*). The *jihad* may be defensive or offensive, and may be considered an individual obligation of all Muslims or a duty of society prepared to fight. Those who fight in the *jihad* become *mujahid*. The *jihad* has evolved from a mere legal concept into practically an ideology used by armed groups to justify their actions.

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## Khutbah

Sermon given prior to the main Friday prayer (*jumu'ah*) at a mosque.

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## Mufti

Religious authority with the power to issue fatwas. The source of his authority is his knowledge of Islamic sciences and the recognition of this authority by the community.

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## Ramadan

Ninth month of the Islamic calendar and the holiest month because, according to tradition, this was the month in which the Prophet received the first revelations of the Koran. Month of physical cleansing by fasting and spiritual cleansing through the recital of verses from the Koran, prayers and rituals performed during the month of Ramadan.

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## Shari'a

The body of Islamic religious law, in other words all legislation based on the Koran and the Tradition of the Prophet (*Sunnah*). It is therefore not a closed and single legal framework but a whole body of law resulting from the interpretation of religious sources. These interpretations make it so diverse, since they may be rigorist, literalist or innovative.

**Salah**

Second pillar of Islam meaning “prayer.” There are five ritual prayers each day, which, according to the Tradition of the Prophet, were performed by the Prophet Muhammad. Prayer always involves a series of prior rituals such as entering a state of purity through ablutions. It is recommended that Friday midday prayer be performed in community and in the mosque, but not the other prayers, which may be performed individually and in any place.

**Sawm**

This means “fasting” and in Islamic religion it refers to abstaining from eating, drinking and sexual intercourse from dawn to sunset. In addition to obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadan, which is one of the five pillars of Islam, there are other days of voluntary non-obligatory fasting and different spiritual doctrines that encourage its followers to follow other fasting disciplines.

**Shi’a**

The second largest group in Islam. This branch of Islam appeared after the political split between Ali and Muawiyah for the succession of the caliphate in the mid 7th century. The *Shia* supported Ali’s as successor because he was the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet (he married Fatima, the Prophet’s daughter).

**Shahada**

Profession of faith of all Muslims recognising the oneness of God and acceptance of Muhammad as prophet. The declaration reads: “There is no god but God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God.”

**Sheikh**

Honorary title that refers to age and

respectability, authority and knowledge. This authority is also sometimes identified with political leadership.

**Sunnah**

This is the Tradition of the Prophet, a body of the words and deeds of Muhammad described in *hadiths*.

**Sunnis**

Or “followers of the tradition of Muhammad”, often recognised as followers of orthodox Islam, in contrast to the *Shia* and other minorities (who, in turn, also consider themselves to be followers of the tradition of the Prophet). The *Sunnis* recognise the four orthodox caliphs (Abu Bakr, Omar, Uthman ibn Affan and Ali) but not Ali’s descendents. While the *Sunnis* were in favour of electing the *imam*, or caliph, from members of the Quraysh tribe, to which Muhammad belonged, Shi’a Muslims believed that Ali and his descendents are the rightful successors to Muhammad. The Sunnis are the majority group in Islam.

**Ulema**

Plural of the Arabic word *‘Alim*, normally meaning “wise man”, although with the time the word has acquired the specific meaning of “scholar of Islamic science”, Islamic law, Koranic exegesis, Hadiths, Islamic legislation, etc.

**Zakat**

This is one of the pillars of Islam. It means alms giving and consists of giving part of the assets or wealth they do not need to live. The purpose is to purify and legitimate the wealth or assets that one keeps for oneself. With time, *zakat* became a tax on property and then fell into disuse. Today it can be given directly as alms or to the State.

# Directory

## ■ Institutional resources on issues relating to religion, immigration and discrimination against Muslims

**Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia**  
c/ Paseo Pintor Rosales, 44, 6ª  
izquierda – 28008 Madrid  
Tel.: 91 185 89 44  
Fax: 91 185 89 55  
<http://www.pluralismoyconvivencia.es>

**Dirección General de Asuntos Religiosos, Ministerio de Justicia**  
c/ de San Bernardo, 19 - 28015  
Madrid  
Tel.: 91 390 45 00  
[www.mjusticia.es](http://www.mjusticia.es)

**Registro de Entidades Religiosas**  
<http://dgraj.mju.es/EntidadesReligiosas/>

**Cooperation Agreement between the Spanish State and the Islamic Commission of Spain (approved by Law 26/1992, of 10 November, B.O.E. (Spanish Official State Gazette) of 12 November)**  
[http://www.mjusticia.es/cs/Satellite?c=OrgPaginaMJ&cid=1079361822828&pagename=Portal\\_del\\_ciudadano%2FOrgPaginaMJ%2FTpl\\_OrgPaginaMJ](http://www.mjusticia.es/cs/Satellite?c=OrgPaginaMJ&cid=1079361822828&pagename=Portal_del_ciudadano%2FOrgPaginaMJ%2FTpl_OrgPaginaMJ)

**Observatorio Español del Racismo y la Xenofobia**  
<http://www.oberaxe.es/>

**Plan Estratégico de Ciudadanía e Inmigración, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales.**  
<http://extranjeros.mtin.es/>

**The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**  
<http://fra.europa.eu/fra/index.php>

**OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)**  
<http://www.osce.org/odihr/>

## ■ Academic resources

**Casa Árabe-Instituto Internacional de Estudios Árabes y del Mundo Musulmán**  
c/ Alcalá, 62 – 28009 Madrid  
Tel.: 91 563 30 66  
Fax: 91 563 30 24  
c/ Martínez Rucker, 9 – 14003 Córdoba  
Tel.: 957 49 84 13  
Fax: 957 47 80 25  
[www.casaarabe-ieam.es](http://www.casaarabe-ieam.es)

**CeiMigra-Centro de Estudios para la Integración Social y Formación de Inmigrantes de la Comunidad Valenciana**  
Gran Vía Fernando el Católico nº 78,  
Valencia  
Julio Colomer 2, Alfafar  
C/ Gravina 4, 1º. 03004 - Alicante.  
<http://www.ceimigra.net/>

**Colectivo Ioé**  
c/ Luna, 11 1º derecha. 28004. Madrid  
Tel.: 91 531 01 23  
Fax: 91 532 96 62  
<http://www.nodo50.org/ioe/>

**Fundación CIDOB**  
c/ Elisabets, 12 – 08001 Barcelona  
Tel.: 93 302 64 95  
[www.cidob.org](http://www.cidob.org)

**IEMed – Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània**  
Carrer Girona 20, 5a planta - 08010  
Barcelona  
Tel.: 93 244 98 50  
[www.iemed.org](http://www.iemed.org)

**Laboratorio de Estudios Interculturales. Universidad de Granada**  
Fac. Ciencias de la Educación. Campus  
Cartuja s/n 18071 Granada  
Tel.: 958 24 28 30  
Fax: 958 24 63 44  
<http://ldei.ugres/>

**Programa Migración y Multiculturalidad**  
Departamento de Antropología Social  
Facultad de Filosofía y Letras  
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid  
Canto Blanco, 28049 Madrid  
[http://www.uam.es/departamentos/filoyletras/antropologia\\_social/PMI/index.html](http://www.uam.es/departamentos/filoyletras/antropologia_social/PMI/index.html)

**TEIM - Taller de Estudios Internacionales Mediterráneos**  
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid,  
Campus de Cantoblanco - 28049  
Madrid  
Tel.: 91 497 39 78  
Fax: 91 497 6895  
<http://www.uam.es/otroscentros/TEIM/>

## ■ Muslim associations and organisations

### ■ Comisión Islámica de España (CIE):

#### Federación Española de Entidades Religiosas Islámicas (FEERI)

c/ Salvador de Madariaga, 4 – 28027 Madrid  
Tel.: 629 55 92 73

#### Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España (UCIDE)

c/ Anastasio Herrero 5 - Madrid 28020  
Tel.: 91 571 40 40  
Fax: 91 570 88 89  
www.ucide.org

### ■ Plataforma de Federaciones Islámicas de España:

#### Consejo Islámico Superior de la Comunidad Valenciana (CISCOVA)

c/ Arquitecto Rodríguez, 17, 19 y 21, bajo derecha – 46019 Valencia

#### Consell Islàmic i Cultural de Catalunya

c/ Tallers, nº 55, entresuelo, 1º, 2º - 08001 Barcelona

#### Federación Islámica de la región de Murcia

c/ General Martín de la Carrera, nº 13 – 30011 Murcia

#### Federación Islámica para la Comunidad Autónoma de las Islas Baleares

c/ Plataner, bloque 2, local 1, Urbanización Son Gubert – 07008 Palma de Mallorca

#### Federación Musulmana de España (FEME)

c/ Pío XII, 4, bajo – 28400 Collado Villalba (Madrid)

#### Minhaj ul-Quran, Centro Cultural-Islámico Camino de la Paz

c/ Arc del Teatre, 19, bajos - 08001 Barcelona  
Tel.: 93 317 71 23  
<http://www.minhajspain.org/index.php>

#### Unión de Comunidades Islámicas del País Vasco

c/ Begoñazpi, 1 – 48006 Bilbao

#### Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de Ceuta

c/ Fernández Amador, 21, 1º - 51002 Ceuta

#### Junta Islámica

Apartado de Correos 2 - 14720 Almodóvar del Río (Córdoba)  
Tel.: 902 43 19 37  
www.juntaislamica.org

#### Yama'a Islámica de al-Andalus (Liga Morisca)

c/ Rey Heredia, 28 – 14003 Córdoba  
<http://www.islamyal-andalus.org/>

#### Consejo Islámico de Granada

Av. de Murcia, 22, Casa 4 – 18012 Granada

#### Mezquita de Granada

Pza. San Nicolás s/n - 18010 Granada  
Tel.: 958 20 19 03  
www.mezquitadegrana.com

#### Comunidad Islámica en España

Tel.: 958 20 25 26  
Fax: 958 29 61 95  
www.cislamica.org

#### Fundación Educativa Al Andalus

Tel.: 958 20 23 31  
www.fundacionalandalus.org

#### Fundación Cultural Azzagra

Alquería de Rosales s/n - 18820 Puebla D. Fadrique (Jaén)  
Tel.: 958 34 44 38  
Fax: 958 72 12 50  
<http://azzagra.com/esp/index.php>

#### Centro Cultural Islámico de Madrid

c/ Salvador de Madariaga, 4 – 28027 Madrid  
Tel.: 91 326 26 10  
Fax: 91 326 78 59  
<http://www.ccislamico.com/>

#### Consejo Religioso Musulmán de Melilla

c/ García Cabrelles, 30 – 52002 Melilla

#### Comunidad Islámica de les Illes Balears (IHSAN)

c/ Gral. Ricardo Ortega, 1, 3º 1ª - 07006 Palma de Mallorca  
Tel.: 971 46 21 92  
www.ihsan.es

#### Consejo Islámico de las Islas Baleares

c/ Juan Mestre, 25, 3º, 2ª – 07004 Palma de Mallorca

#### Fundación Mezquita de Sevilla

P.O.Box. 11188 - 41014 Sevilla  
www.mezquitadesevilla.com

#### Centro Cultural Islámico de Valencia (CCIV)

c/ Arquitecto Rodríguez, 17, 19 y 21 - 46019 Valencia.  
Tel: 963 60 33 30  
Fax: 963 62 06 91  
www.webcciv.org

#### Gran Mezquita de Valencia, Centro Islámico en España

c/ Palencia 5 - 46021 Valencia  
Tel.: 963 93 34 34  
www.gmezv.com

#### Unión de las Comunidades Islámicas de Valencia

c/ Méndez Núñez, 47. Bjo. - 46024 Valencia  
Tel.: 963 30 93 03  
Fax: 963 22 57 97  
<http://ucidvalencia.org/index.html>

#### Orden Sufí Naqshbandi

<http://www.naqshbandi.org.es/>

#### Orden Sufí Nematollahí

<http://www.nematollahi.org/>

## ■ Foundations and cultural institutions

### Casa África

c/ Alfonso XIII, 5 – 35003 Las Palmas de Gran Canaria  
Tel.: 928 432 800  
[www.casafrica.es](http://www.casafrica.es)

### Darek-Nyumba

c/ Alcalá, 41, 3º izquierda - 28014 Madrid  
Tel.: 91 532 62 50  
[www.dareknyumba.com](http://www.dareknyumba.com)

### La Escuela de Convivencia, Comunidad de Madrid

c/ Plaza de los Reyes Magos, 12 – 28007 Madrid  
Tel.: 91 434 39 42  
Fax: 91 502 13 61  
<http://www.escueladeconvivencia.org/>

### Fundació Bayt Al-Thaqafa

c/ Princesa, 14 – 08003 Barcelona  
Tel.: 93 319 88 69  
<http://www.bayt-al-thaqafa.org/>

### Fundación de Cultura Islámica (FUNCI)

c/ Guzmán el Bueno, 3 – 28015 Madrid  
Tel.: 91 543 46 73  
[www.funci.org](http://www.funci.org)

### Fundación Euroárabe

c/ San Jerónimo, 27 - 18001 Granada  
Tel.: 958 20 65 08  
Fax: 958 20 83 54  
[www.fundea.net](http://www.fundea.net)

### Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo

c/ Max Planck, 2 – 41092 Sevilla  
Tel.: 954 08 80 30  
Fax: 954 08 15 06  
[www.tresculturas.org](http://www.tresculturas.org)

## ■ Associations and NGOs on immigration and intercultural and inter-religious dialogue

### Asociación para el Diálogo Interreligioso de la Comunidad de Madrid (ADIM)

c/ Orense, 26, 1 - 28020 Madrid  
Tel.: 91 522 94 98  
<http://adimadrid.com/>

### Asociación Marroquí para la Integración de los Inmigrantes

Bulevard Luis Pasteur, 35, Campus Teatinos, Universidad de Málaga – 29071 Málaga  
Tel.: 687 32 00 03  
<http://www.asociacionmarroqui.com/>

### Asociación de Trabajadores e Inmigrantes Marroquíes en España (ATIME)

c/ Canillas, 56 - 28002 Madrid  
Tel.: 91 744 00 70  
Fax: 91 519 38 90  
[www.atime.es](http://www.atime.es)

### Asociación Sociocultural Ibn Batuta

c/ Sant Pau, 82 Bajos – 08001 Barcelona  
Tel.: 93 329 30 54  
Fax: 93 329 35 40  
<http://www.ascib.net/>

## ■ Other Internet resources

### Blog of Abdennur Prado

<http://abdennurpradowordpress.com/>

### Blog of Ndeye Andujar

<http://ndeyeandujar.wordpress.com/>

### Feminismo islámico

<http://www.feminismeislamic.org/>

### Islam en Euskadi

<http://groups.msn.com/elislameneuskadi>

### Observatorio Andalúsí

<http://mx.geocities.com/hispanomuslime/oban.htm>

### Observatorio de la Islamofobia

<http://islamofobia.blogspot.com/>

### Onda Islam

<http://www.ondaislam.com/>

### WebIslam, portal de noticias sobre el islam en España

[www.webislam.com](http://www.webislam.com)